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**COLLECTED POEMS  
OF HENRY THOREAU**





COLLECTED POEMS  
of  
Henry  
Thoreau



*edited by*  
Carl Bode

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PACKARD AND COMPANY

CHICAGO, 1943

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DESIGNED BY BERT KEMPSHALL, CHICAGO, AND  
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY PANTAGRAPH PRESS, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

To  
MY FRIENDS IN  
THE THOREAU SOCIETY



## INTRODUCTION

"The purest strain, and the loftiest, I think, that has yet pealed from this unpoetic American forest," Ralph Waldo Emerson declared after being shown an early poem of Thoreau's.

A week later he wrote across the ocean to Thomas Carlyle about this young poet named Thoreau, who was writing "the truest verses." To the surprise of Concord, Emerson proceeded to act as evangelist for the poetry of his shy and prickly neighbor. But by 1841, two years after the letter to Carlyle, his enthusiasm had begun to cool. At that time the *Dial* was already being published, with Emerson and Margaret Fuller in charge of selecting the material to go into it. There the evangelist yielded to the editor; and Thoreau's verse, far from sacred, was exposed to heavy editorial suggestion or to rejection. And then, a year or so later, we know that Thoreau destroyed many of the verses he had written—destroyed them at the instance of Emerson, "who did not praise them."

There, in forecast, is the history of Thoreau's reputation as a poet. A hundred years ago, great men—as they are now reckoned in American literature—talked about his poems. Not always esteemed, the verses were by no means ignored. Bronson Alcott applauded them; Lowell asserted their rawness; Hawthorne gave them a grudging approval. Yet by about 1847 Thoreau's prose was beginning its bid for recognition; and soon, in his own eyes and



in the eyes of his circle, Thoreau began to be viewed as a writer whose destined medium was prose. By the time of his death he was known to the discerning as a man to be reckoned with in American letters. By the turn of the century, Thoreau, author of *Walden*, was world-renowned. And Thoreau the poet was forgotten.

The world thus repeated Emerson's change of attitude toward Thoreau's verse. But there was a difference. Emerson afterward achieved a balanced judgment. His early praise and his later criticism corrected one another, and his final verdict, prepared shortly after Thoreau died, gave the poetry measured praise. In Thoreau's work, pronounced Emerson, it was true that the gold did "not yet run pure," was "drossy and crude." But still, it was gold. Then too, although Thoreau lacked technical ease, he had the genius of the true poet. Moreover, Emerson added, in a comment that was often to be echoed, Thoreau's "biography is in his verses."

That the poetry Henry Thoreau scrawled and labored over, and later neglected, has its defects as well as its values, no one would deny. Yet almost every bit of the verse has a dry, oblique power. It has, moreover, the virtue of lighting up its creator's life. There is of course the biography of the heart and the biography of the mind. The poems can help us to understand both. On the one hand, for example, Thoreau's earnest love for Ellen Sewall is illuminated in the lyrics he wrote when she came into his life. On the other, his rigid principle of intellect is revealed in such a poem as "Wait not till slaves pronounce the word," where his searching advice to the abolitionists is to remember that there are more forms of slavery besides negro slavery, there are subtler masters enchainning us all.



A generation before Emerson's penetrating remark, Thoreau himself had spoken to the point, saying "Poetry is a piece of very private history, which unostentatiously lets us into the secret of a man's life." Indeed, though Thoreau came to see, as everyone still does, that prose was his medium, he by no means overlooked the importance of poetry. For several years after graduation from "Cambridge College" he considered himself a practicing poet. Much of the large amount of verse he mentions writing has not come down to us, but what is left still forms a far larger body than a glance through his collected works might lead anyone to think. Furthermore, Thoreau did not confine himself to the actual production of poems. He found time to develop and set forth a considerable poetics. His statements about poetry and the poet are scattered through both the books and essays, and the Journal. In synthesis they embody a theory that is shrewd as well as intuitive. Thoreau, as a matter of record, maintained his interest in the theory of poetry long after he abandoned the practice. Jottings about the function of the poet appear in the Journal almost to the end. True, by then Thoreau had widened the definition of his important terms, *poet* and *poetry*, but his final comments still showed no basic conflict with his earliest pronouncements. So Thoreau theorized for nearly three decades but composed poems, with zeal, for only a handful of years. In that fact lies one of the main causes for the long-continued neglect of his verse by others. Thoreau's own loss of interest was duplicated by that of the rest of the world.

There are, on analysis, three major reasons why most persons have ignored Thoreau's poetry. The first in im-



portance, perhaps, is its uneven quality. The second, and related, reason is the fact that he himself lost enthusiasm for the poetic medium; the quantity of his production quickly dwindled. The third is the mistaken belief that the verses are mere fragments woven into the prose, especially in the *Week*, and inseparable from it.

The quality and quantity of Thoreau's verse marched side by side during his literary career. When he wrote the most poetry, he was writing the best poetry—with one nearly inevitable qualification. Thoreau did improve, for a while, in his craft as he practiced it. He first paid distinct attention to verse writing in his final college years. His attempts at that time and up to about 1839 were uneven and mainly derivative. Among the best were "I am a parcel of vain strivings tied" and the 1838 "Friendship"; the worst included such an effusion as "My Boots." Soon he began to find his own style and approach, and, with a lapse in 1840, the years from 1839 through 1842 were his most skillful and productive. The readers of that radical publication, the *Dial*, were privileged to see some of the finest—in part despite editorial pressure and in part perhaps because of it—among Thoreau's poems. But the *Dial* did not live long, and by the time of its demise the output and quality of Thoreau's poetry had sagged. The most remarkable poems that he inserted in the 1849 *Week* were the very ones he had published in the *Dial* seven and eight years earlier. By February, 1852, Thoreau noted dryly but sadly:

The strains from my muse are as rare nowadays, or of late years, as the notes of birds in the winter,—the faintest occasional tinkling sound, and mostly of



the woodpecker kind or the harsh jay or crow. It never melts into a song.

The verse used in *Walden*, except for the reprinted "Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird," was negligible. The last few pieces set down in the Journal, aside from one final lyric of 1857, slid into prose. Then, aside from a line or so, Thoreau was done.

The third reason for the general neglect of his verse was given its fullest expression in the preface to the little volume of Thoreau's poetry, *Poems of Nature*, published in 1895. Explaining that it included only two-thirds (actually much less) of the available material, the editors, H. S. Salt and F. B. Sanborn, apologized for not printing more. Many lyrics, they argued, were nothing but pendants to Thoreau's prose; were little bits of verse, so interwoven that it would have been unjust, artistically, to wrench them from their context. The editors had the prose of the *Week* particularly in mind. It does have a great deal of verse apparently imbedded in it. Because the view put forth by Salt and Sanborn must be faced by anyone compiling a fuller edition of the poems, it ought at this point briefly to be examined. Was their stand well taken?

A study of the *Week* will tell. Close to a dozen of the fullest and most important poems in it had already been published, as separate poems, elsewhere. Most of them had appeared in the *Dial*, and all Thoreau did when he put them into the *Week* was to cut off their titles. In three cases he did not even do that. Besides these poems, there was a considerable number of others which Thoreau had composed, again separately, in his Journal. Later these were polished and inserted in the *Week*. A third group consists of fragments. They, it is true, are hard to separate



from their prose context. On the other hand, these fragments are often parts of longer poems Thoreau had written, and can be collated against the full versions from which he took them. For example, Thoreau used half a dozen snatches of "The Assabet" and "Inspiration" in the *Week*. Yet they all exist as parts of these long full poems. There are also a few poems which are actually so interwoven in the prose that they contain references to the prose surrounding them. In those cases, a synopsis of the context has been added in the notes to the Critical Edition. There remain, finally, three or four poems that are fragmentary not through any fault of Thoreau's but because their opening pages have been cut out of the Journal in which he wrote them. To sum up, the great number of his poems can stand as entities and by themselves.

Here, then, is every available piece of original verse that Henry Thoreau composed. With only about half a dozen exceptions, it has the authority either of publication during his own life or else of his own autograph. In general, the posthumous verse is for the first time presented exactly—allowing for editorial error—as he wrote it. The glowing lines and the quiet, the prosaic and the Transcendental—they are all here. Almost all have at the very least the large, astringent force of young genius. Thoreau himself, let it be said, was pleased when his poetry won someone's commendation; but all, surely, that Thoreau would have needed to ask of the reader then or now, a century ago or today, is what his admired Wordsworth asked:

One request I must make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems, he would decide by his own feelings genuinely.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For permission to use manuscripts of Thoreau's verse I am indebted to the Abernethy Library of American Literature, Middlebury College; the Harvard College Library; the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery; Mr. Albert Edgar Lownes; the Pierpont Morgan Library; the New York Public Library; Mr. W. Stephen Thomas; and the Yale University Library. The Houghton Mifflin Company has allowed me to quote from material by Thoreau, in particular, the published Journal and *Poems of Nature*, for which it holds the copyright.

I wish also to acknowledge the helpfulness of Professors Elsie F. Brickett and Gay W. Allen, who lent photostats and microfilms respectively. Dr. Viola White, besides preparing typescripts of the verse in the Abernethy Library, answered numerous questions connected with the edition; Miss Edythe N. Backus was responsible for the important Huntington Library transcriptions; and Mr. John Colwell recollated the poetry in the Harvard College Library. The painstaking secretarial help of Mrs. John W. Rau, Jr. and of Miss Dorothy Garrett has been invaluable. Nor should I want to take for granted the thorough coöperation afforded me by the librarians of Northwestern University and Keuka College. Henry Seidel Canby's careful and comprehensive biography has, for our generation, made any additional life of Thoreau unnecessary; and I have often drawn on his book for my notes, in the Critical

Edition of the *Collected Poems*, on the content of the verse. Both Dr. Canby and Dr. Arthur Christy furthered the progress of my edition with information at their disposal; Mr. Walter Harding, secretary of the Thoreau Society, kindly checked the references about the Thoreau country in the notes to the Critical Edition; and Professor Walter Hendricks was responsible for directing the book through the press.

This edition was first suggested to me by Professor Leon Howard of Northwestern University, and it owes much to his learning and common sense. My debt, finally, to my wife is great—how great, only someone who has undertaken a project like mine could appreciate.

January 4, 1943  
Keuka Park, New York

C. B.



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**COLLECTED POEMS  
OF HENRY THOREAU**



## NOTE ON THE ORDER OF THE POEMS

Of the poems published mainly while Thoreau was still living those on pages 3-22 made their final appearance, during his lifetime, in the *Dial* and other periodicals. The only posthumously printed verses in this section, aside from "Carpe Diem," appeared in articles for which Thoreau had at least partly corrected the proofs and which came out in the *Atlantic Monthly* shortly after his death. The periodical verse is arranged in the order of publication; the couplets, however, are grouped together at the end of this section as are the couplets in succeeding sections. The quatrain on page 23 Thoreau printed in the 1849 edition of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* but dropped from the revised edition. The poems on pages 24-27 are the ones to be found in *Walden*, and the quatrain on page 28 first appeared in the 1864 edition of *The Maine Woods*. The poetry on pages 29-85 comes from the 1868 edition of the *Week*. When Thoreau revised the *Week* for this second edition, it should be noted, he made very few changes in the text of the poems; and he added only one quatrain and a couplet.

Of the poems unpublished during Thoreau's lifetime those on pages 86-187 have a date of composition determined, with the final date, if there are two or more, dictating where the poem is placed. The verse in this section is arranged chronologically. The poems without a known date of composition are divided into those having manuscript authority and those lacking it. Verse with manuscript authority, pages 188-229, is drawn from the noted Thoreau collections and is grouped according to those sources. This order is less arbitrary than it may first seem, since each major manuscript holding happens to have some homogeneity. The order of the poems within each manuscript holding, aside from that of the Huntington Library, is determined by a variety of external and internal factors. The succession of the Huntington Library poems is based on the Library's own tentative chronology. Verse without manuscript authority either entirely or for the basic text here in the *Collected Poems* is arranged according to the order of publication of its printed sources, and is to be found on pages 230-243. Finally, poems of doubtful authenticity, as well as miscellanea, are given on pages 244-247.



*WITHIN THE CIRCUIT OF THIS PLODDING LIFE*

Within the circuit of this plodding life  
There enter moments of an azure hue,  
Untarnished fair as is the violet  
Or anemone, when the spring strews them  
By some meandering rivulet, which make  
The best philosophy untrue that aims  
But to console man for his grievances.  
I have remembered when the winter came,  
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,  
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,  
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,  
The icy spears were adding to their length  
Against the arrows of the coming sun,  
How in the shimmering noon of summer past  
Some unrecorded beam slanted across  
The upland pastures where the Johnswort grew;  
Or heard, amid the verdure of my mind,  
The bee's long smothered hum, on the blue flag  
Loitering amidst the mead; or busy rill,  
Which now through all its course stands still and dumb  
Its own memorial,—purling at its play  
Along the slopes, and through the meadows next,  
Until its youthful sound was hushed at last  
In the staid current of the lowland stream;  
Or seen the furrows shine but late upturned,  
And where the fieldfare followed in the rear,  
When all the fields around lay bound and hoar  
Beneath a thick integument of snow.  
So by God's cheap economy made rich  
To go upon my winter's task again.



*HIS STEADY SAILS HE NEVER FURLS*

His steady sails he never furls  
At any time o' year,  
And perching now on Winter's curls,  
He whistles in his ear.

*SOMETIMES I HEAR THE VEERY'S CLARION*

Sometimes I hear the veery's clarion,  
Or brazen trump of the impatient jay,  
And in secluded woods the chickadee  
Doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise  
Of heroes, and set forth the loveliness  
Of virtue evermore.

*UPON THE LOFTY ELM TREE SPRAYS*

Upon the lofty elm tree sprays  
The vireo rings the changes sweet,  
During the trivial summer days,  
Striving to lift our thoughts above the street.

*THOU DUSKY SPIRIT OF THE WOOD*

Thou dusky spirit of the wood,  
Bird of an ancient brood,  
Flitting thy lonely way,  
A meteor in the summer's day,  
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,  
Low over forest, field and rill,  
What wouldst thou say?  
Why shouldst thou haunt the day?  
What makes thy melancholy float?  
What bravery inspires thy throat,  
And bears thee up above the clouds,  
Over desponding human crowds,  
Which far below  
Lay thy haunts low?

*THE RIVER SWELLETH MORE AND MORE*

The river swelleth more and more,  
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er  
The passive town; and for a while  
Each tussuck makes a tiny isle,  
Where, on some friendly Ararat,  
Resteth the weary water-rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,  
Her very current e'en is hid,  
As deepest souls do calmest rest,  
When thoughts are swelling in the breast,  
And she that in the summer's drought  
Doth make a rippling and a rout,  
Sleeps from Nahshawtuck to the Cliff,  
Unruffled by a single skiff.  
But by a thousand distant hills  
The louder roar a thousand rills,  
And many a spring which now is dumb,  
And many a stream with smothered hum,  
Doth swifter well and faster glide,  
Though buried deep beneath the tide.

Our village shows a rural Venice,  
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is;  
As lovely as the Bay of Naples  
Yon placid cove amid the maples;  
And in my neighbor's field of corn  
I recognise the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,  
When only red men came to hear,  
Methinks 'twas in this school of art  
Venice and Naples learned their part,  
But still their mistress, to my mind,  
Her young disciples leaves behind.



*GREAT GOD, I ASK THEE FOR NO MEANER PELF*

Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf  
Than that I may not disappoint myself,  
That in my action I may soar as high,  
As I can now discern with this clear eye.

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,  
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,  
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,  
They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me.

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,  
And my life practice more than my tongue saith;  
That my low conduct may not show,  
Nor my relenting lines,  
That I thy purpose did not know,  
Or overrated thy designs.

## THE MOON

Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;  
Mortality below her orb is placed.

—*Raleigh.*

The full-orbed moon with unchanged ray  
Mounts up the eastern sky,  
Not doomed to these short nights for aye,  
But shining steadily.

She does not wane, but my fortune,  
Which her rays do not bless,  
My wayward path declineth soon,  
But she shines not the less.

And if she faintly glimmers here,  
And paled is her light,  
Yet alway in her proper sphere  
She's mistress of the night.



*TO A STRAY FOWL*

Poor bird! destined to lead thy life  
Far in the adventurous west,  
And here to be debarred to-night  
From thy accustomed nest;  
Must thou fall back upon old instinct now—  
Well nigh extinct under man's fickle care?  
Did heaven bestow its quenchless inner light  
So long ago, for thy small want to-night?  
Why stand'st upon thy toes to crow so late?  
The moon is deaf to thy low feathered fate;  
Or dost thou think so to possess the night,  
And people the drear dark with thy brave sprite?  
And now with anxious eye thou look'st about,  
While the relentless shade draws on its veil,  
For some sure shelter from approaching dews,  
And the insidious steps of nightly foes.  
I fear imprisonment has dulled thy wit,  
Or ingrained servitude extinguished it.  
But no—dim memory of the days of yore,  
By Brahmapootra and the Jumna's shore,  
—Where thy proud race flew swiftly o'er the heath,  
And sought its food the jungle's shade beneath,  
Has taught thy wings to seek yon friendly trees,  
As erst by Indus' banks and far Ganges.

*THE SLUGGISH SMOKE CURLS UP  
FROM SOME DEEP DELL*

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,  
The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,  
And making slow acquaintance with the day;  
Delaying now upon its heavenward course,  
In wreathed loiterings dallying with itself,  
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,  
As its half-wakened master by the hearth,  
Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts  
Have not yet swept into the onward current  
Of the new day;—and now it streams afar,  
The while the chopper goes with step direct,  
And mind intent to swing the early axe.

First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad  
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,  
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,  
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;  
And while he crouches still beside the hearth,  
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,  
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,  
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,  
Draped the tree tops, loitered upon the hill,  
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;  
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,  
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,  
And greets its master's eye at his low door,  
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.



*WHEN WINTER FRINGES EVERY BOUGH*

When Winter fringes every bough  
With his fantastic wreath,  
And puts the seal of silence now  
Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its pent-house  
Goes gurgling on its way,  
And in his gallery the mouse  
Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,  
And lurketh underneath,  
As that same meadow mouse doth lie  
Snug in the last year's heath.

And if perchance the chickadee  
Lisp a faint note anon,  
The snow in summer's canopy,  
Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,  
And dazzling fruits depend,  
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,  
The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,  
The while I stand all ear,  
Of a serene eternity,  
Which need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway  
The restless ice doth crack,  
And pond sprites merry gambols play  
Amid the deafening rack.

Eager I hasten to the vale,  
As if I heard brave news,  
How nature held high festival,  
Which it were hard to lose.

I gambol with my neighbor ice,  
And sympathizing quake,  
As each new crack darts in a trice  
Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,  
And faggot on the hearth,  
Resounds the rare domestic sound  
Along the forest path.



***NOT UNCONCERNED WACHUSETT  
REARS HIS HEAD***

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head  
Above the field, so late from nature won,  
With patient brow reserved, as one who read  
New annals in the history of man.

## THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

Where they once dug for money,  
But never found any;  
Where sometimes Martial Miles  
Singly files,  
And Elijah Wood,  
I fear for no good:  
No other man,  
Save Elisha Dugan,—  
O man of wild habits,  
Partridges and rabbits,  
Who hast no cares  
Only to set snares,  
Who liv'st all alone,  
Close to the bone,  
And where life is sweetest  
Constantly eatest.

When the spring stirs my blood  
With the instinct to travel,  
I can get enough gravel  
On the Old Marlborough Road.  
Nobody repairs it,  
For nobody wears it;  
It is a living way,  
As the Christians say.  
Not many there be  
Who enter therein,  
Only the guests of the  
Irishman Quin.

What is it, what is it,  
But a direction out there,  
And the bare possibility  
Of going somewhere?  
Great guide-boards of stone,  
But travellers none;  
Cenotaphs of the towns  
Named on their crowns.  
It is worth going to see  
Where you *might* be.  
What king  
Did the thing,  
I am still wondering;  
Set up how or when,  
By what selectmen,  
Gourgas or Lee,  
Clark or Darby?  
They're a great endeavor  
To be something forever;  
Blank tablets of stone,  
Where a traveller might groan,  
And in one sentence  
Grave all that it known;  
Which another might read,  
In his extreme need.  
I know one or two  
Lines that would do,  
Literature that might stand  
All over the land,  
Which a man could remember  
Till next December,

And read again in the spring,  
After the thawing.  
If with fancy unfurled  
You leave your abode,  
You may go round the world  
By the Old Marlborough Road.



*IN TWO YEARS' TIME 'T HAD THUS*

In two years' time 't had thus  
Reached the level of the rocks,  
Admired the stretching world,  
Nor feared the wandering flocks.

But at this tender age  
Its sufferings began:  
There came a browsing ox  
And cut it down a span.

*CARPE DIEM*

Build not on to-morrow,  
But seize on to-day!  
From no future borrow,  
The present to pay.

Wait not any longer  
Thy work to begin;  
The worker grows stronger,—  
Be steadfast and win!

Forbode not new sorrow—  
Bear that of to-day,  
And trust that the morrow  
Shall chase it away.

The task of the present  
Be sure to fulfil;  
If sad, or if pleasant,  
Be true to it still.

God sendeth us sorrow  
And cloudeth our day;  
His sun on the morrow  
Shines bright on our way.

*EACH SUMMER SOUND*

Each summer sound  
Is a summer round.

*THE NEEDLES OF THE PINE*

The needles of the pine,  
All to the west incline.

*IN THE EAST FAMES ARE WON*

In the East fames are won,  
In the West deeds are done.

*LOVE EQUALS SWIFT AND SLOW*

Love equals swift and slow,  
And high and low,  
Racer and lame,  
The hunter and his game.



*MEN SAY THEY KNOW  
MANY THINGS*

Men say they know many things;  
But lo! they have taken wings,—  
The arts and sciences,  
And a thousand appliances;  
The wind that blows  
Is all that any body knows.

*WHAT'S THE RAILROAD TO ME*

What's the railroad to me?  
I never go to see  
Where it ends.  
It fills a few hollows,  
And makes banks for the swallows,  
It sets the sand a-blowing,  
And the blackberries a-growing,

*IT IS NO DREAM OF MINE*

It is no dream of mine,  
To ornament a line;  
I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven  
Than I live to Walden even.  
I am its stony shore,  
And the breeze that passes o'er;  
In the hollow of my hand  
Are its water and its sand,  
And its deepest resort  
Lies high in my thought.



*LIGHT-WINGED SMOKE, ICARIAN BIRD*

Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,  
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,  
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,  
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;  
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form  
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;  
By night star-veiling, and by day  
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;  
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,  
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

*DIE AND BE BURIED WHO WILL*

Die and be buried who will,  
I mean to live here still;  
My nature grows ever more young  
The primitive pines among.

*WHERE'ER THOU SAIL'ST  
WHO SAILED WITH ME*

Where'er thou sail'st who sailed with me,  
Though now thou climbest loftier mounts,  
And fairer rivers dost ascend,  
Be thou my Muse, my Brother—.



*I AM BOUND, I AM BOUND,  
FOR A DISTANT SHORE*

I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore,  
By a lonely isle, by a far Azore,  
There it is, there it is, the treasure I seek,  
On the barren sands of a desolate creek.

*I SAILED UP A RIVER WITH A PLEASANT WIND*

I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind,  
New lands, new people, and new thoughts to find;  
Many fair reaches and headlands appeared,  
And many dangers were there to be feared;  
But when I remember where I have been,  
And the fair landscapes that I have seen,  
THOU seemest the only permanent shore,  
The cape never rounded, nor wandered o'er.

## *THE RESPECTABLE FOLKS*

The respectable folks,—  
Where dwell they?  
They whisper in the oaks,  
And they sigh in the hay;  
Summer and winter, night and day,  
Out on the meadow, there dwell they.  
They never die,  
Nor snivel, nor cry,  
Nor ask our pity  
With a wet eye.  
A sound estate they ever mend,  
To every asker readily lend;  
To the ocean wealth,  
To the meadow health,  
To Time his length,  
To the rocks strength,  
To the stars light,  
To the weary night,  
To the busy day,  
To the idle play;  
And so their good cheer never ends,  
For all are their debtors, and all their friends.



*AH, 'TIS IN VAIN THE PEACEFUL DIN*

Ah, 'tis in vain the peaceful din  
That wakes the ignoble town,  
Not thus did braver spirits win  
A patriot's renown.

There is one field beside this stream,  
Wherein no foot does fall,  
But yet it beareth in my dream  
A richer crop than all.

Let me believe a dream so dear,  
Some heart beat high that day,  
Above the petty Province here,  
And Britain far away;

Some hero of the ancient mould,  
Some arm of knightly worth,  
Of strength unbought, and faith unsold,  
Honored this spot of earth;

Who sought the prize his heart described,  
And did not ask release,  
Whose free-born valor was not bribed  
By prospect of a peace.

The men who stood on yonder height  
That day are long since gone;  
Not the same hand directs the fight  
And monumental stone.

Ye were the Grecian cities then,  
The Romes of modern birth,  
Where the New England husbandmen  
Have shown a Roman worth.

In vain I search a foreign land  
To find our Bunker Hill,  
And Lexington and Concord stand  
By no Laconian rill.

*BUT SINCE WE SAILED*

But since we sailed  
Some things have failed,  
And many a dream  
Gone down the stream.

Here then an aged shepherd dwelt,  
Who to his flock his substance dealt,  
And ruled them with a vigorous crook,  
By precept of the sacred Book;  
But he the pierless bridge passed o'er,  
And solitary left the shore.

Anon a youthful pastor came,  
Whose crook was not unknown to fame,  
His lambs he viewed with gentle glance,  
Spread o'er the country's wide expanse,  
And fed with "Mosses from the Manse."  
Here was our Hawthorne in the dale,  
And here the shepherd told his tale.

ON PONKAWTASSET, SINCE, WE TOOK OUR WAY

On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way,  
Down this still stream to far Billericay,  
A poet wise has settled, whose fine ray  
Doth often shine on Concord's twilight day.

Like those first stars, whose silver beams on high,  
Shining more brightly as the day goes by,  
Most travellers cannot at first descry,  
But eyes that wont to range the evening sky,

And know celestial lights, do plainly see,  
And gladly hail them, numbering two or three;  
For lore that's deep must deeply studied be,  
As from deep wells men read star-poetry.

These stars are never paled, though out of sight,  
But like the sun they shine forever bright;  
Ay, *they* are suns, though earth must in its flight  
Put out its eyes that it may see their light.

Who would neglect the least celestial sound,  
Or faintest light that falls on earthly ground,  
If he could know it one day would be found  
That star in Cygnus whither we are bound,  
And pale our sun with heavenly radiance round?



*AN EARLY UNCONVERTED SAINT*

An early unconverted Saint,  
Free from noontide or evening taint,  
Heathen without reproach,  
That did upon the civil day encroach,  
And ever since its birth  
Had trod the outskirts of the earth.

*LOW IN THE EASTERN SKY*

Low in the eastern sky  
Is set thy glancing eye;  
And though its gracious light  
Ne'er riseth to my sight,  
Yet every star that climbs  
Above the gnarled limbs  
Of yonder hill,  
Conveys thy gentle will.

Believe I knew thy thought,  
And that the zephyrs brought  
Thy kindest wishes through,  
As mine they bear to you,  
That some attentive cloud  
Did pause amid the crowd  
Over my head,  
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,  
And that the flower-bells rung,  
That herbs exhaled their scent,  
And beasts knew what was meant,  
The trees a welcome waved,  
And lakes their margins laved,  
When thy free mind  
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,  
The air did gently heave  
While yet a low-hung cloud  
Thy eastern skies did shroud;  
The lightning's silent gleam,  
Startling my drowsy dream,  
    Seemed like the flash  
Under thy dark eyelash.

Still will I strive to be  
As if thou wert with me;  
Whatever path I take,  
It shall be for thy sake,  
Of gentle slope and wide,  
As thou wert by my side,  
    Without a root  
To trip thy gentle foot.

I'll walk with gentle pace,  
And choose the smoothest place,  
And careful dip the oar,  
And shun the winding shore,  
And gently steer my boat  
Where water-lilies float,  
    And cardinal flowers  
Stand in their sylvan bowers.

*DONG, SOUNDS THE BRASS  
IN THE EAST*

Dong, sounds the brass in the east,  
As if to a funeral feast,  
But I like that sound the best  
Out of the fluttering west.

The steeple ringeth a knell,  
But the fairies' silvery bell  
Is the voice of that gentle folk,  
Or else the horizon that spoke.

Its metal is not of brass,  
But air, and water, and glass,  
And under a cloud it is swung,  
And by the wind it is rung.

When the steeple tolleth the noon,  
It soundeth not so soon,  
Yet it rings a far earlier hour,  
And the sun has not reached its tower.



*I MAKE YE AN OFFER*

I make ye an offer,  
Ye gods, hear the scoffer,  
The scheme will not hurt you,  
If ye will find goodness, I will find virtue.  
Though I am your creature,  
And child of your nature,  
I have pride still unbended,  
And blood undescended,  
Some free independence,  
And my own descendants.  
I cannot toil blindly,  
Though ye behave kindly,  
And I swear by the rood,  
I'll be slave to no God.  
If ye will deal plainly,  
I will strive mainly,  
If ye will discover,  
Great plans to your lover,  
And give him a sphere  
Somewhat larger than here.

*CONSCIENCE IS INSTINCT BRED IN THE HOUSE*

Conscience is instinct bred in the house,  
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin  
By an unnatural breeding in and in.  
I say, Turn it out doors,  
Into the moors.  
I love a life whose plot is simple,  
And does not thicken with every pimple,  
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,  
That makes the universe no worse than 't finds it.  
I love an earnest soul,  
Whose mighty joy and sorrow  
Are not drowned in a bowl,  
And brought to life to-morrow;  
That lives one tragedy,  
And not seventy;  
A conscience worth keeping,  
Laughing not weeping;  
A conscience wise and steady,  
And forever ready;  
Not changing with events,  
Dealing in compliments;  
A conscience exercised about  
Large things, where one *may* doubt.  
I love a soul not all of wood,  
Predestinated to be good,  
But true to the backbone  
Unto itself alone,  
And false to none;

Born to its own affairs,  
Its own joys and own cares;  
By whom the work which God begun  
Is finished, and not undone;  
Taken up where he left off,  
Whether to worship or to scoff;  
If not good, why then evil,  
If not good god, good devil.  
Goodness! you hypocrite, come out of that,  
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.  
I have no patience towards  
Such conscientious cowards.  
Give me simple laboring folk,  
Who love their work,  
Whose virtue is a song  
To cheer God along.

*SUCH WATER DO THE GODS DISTIL*

Such water do the gods distil,  
And pour down every hill  
For their New England men;  
A draught of this wild nectar bring,  
And I'll not taste the spring  
Of Helicon again.



## *THAT PHAETON OF OUR DAY*

That Phaeton of our day,  
Who'd make another milky way,  
And burn the world up with his ray;

By us an undisputed seer,—  
Who'd drive his flaming car so near  
Unto our shuddering mortal sphere,

Disgracing all our slender worth,  
And scorching up the living earth,  
To prove his heavenly birth.

The silver spokes, the golden tire,  
Are glowing with unwonted fire,  
And ever nigher roll and nigher;

The pins and axle melted are,  
The silver radii fly afar,  
Ah, he will spoil his Father's car!

Who let him have the steeds he cannot steer?  
Henceforth the sun will not shine for a year;  
And we shall Ethiops all appear.

*THOUGH ALL THE FATES SHOULD  
PROVE UNKIND*

Though all the fates should prove unkind,  
Leave not your native land behind.  
The ship, becalmed, at length stands still;  
The steed must rest beneath the hill;  
But swiftly still our fortunes pace  
To find us out in every place.

The vessel, though her masts be firm,  
Beneath her copper bears a worm;  
Around the cape, across the line,  
Till fields of ice her course confine;  
It matters not how smooth the breeze,  
How shallow or how deep the seas,  
Whether she bears Manilla twine,  
Or in her hold Madeira wine,  
Or China teas, or Spanish hides,  
In port or quarantine she rides;  
Far from New England's blustering shore,  
New England's worm her hulk shall bore,  
And sink her in the Indian seas,  
Twine, wine, and hides, and China teas.

*WITH FRONTIER STRENGTH YE STAND  
YOUR GROUND*

With frontier strength ye stand your ground,  
With grand content ye circle round,  
Tumultuous silence for all sound,  
Ye distant nursery of rills,  
Monadnock and the Peterborough Hills;—  
Firm argument that never stirs,  
Outcircling the philosophers,—  
Like some vast fleet,  
Sailing through rain and sleet,  
Through winter's cold and summer's heat;  
Still holding on upon your high emprise,  
Until ye find a shore amid the skies;  
Not skulking close to land,  
With cargo contraband,  
For they who sent a venture out by ye  
Have set the Sun to see  
Their honesty.  
Ships of the line, each one,  
Ye westward run,  
Convoying clouds,  
Which cluster in your shrouds,  
Always before the gale,  
Under a press of sail,  
With weight of metal all untold,—  
I seem to feel ye in my firm seat here,  
Immeasurable depth of hold,  
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear.



Methinks ye take luxurious pleasure  
In your novel western leisure;  
So cool your brows and freshly blue,  
As Time had naught for ye to do;  
For ye lie at your length,  
An unappropriated strength,  
Unhewn primeval timber,  
For knees so stiff, for masts so limber;  
The stock of which new earths are made,  
One day to be our *western* trade,  
Fit for the stanchions of a world  
Which through the seas of space is hurled.

While we enjoy a lingering ray,  
Ye still o'ertop the western day,  
Reposing yonder on God's croft  
Like solid stacks of hay;  
So bold a line as ne'er was writ  
On any page by human wit;  
The forest glows as if  
An enemy's camp-fires shone  
Along the horizon,  
Or the day's funeral pyre  
Were lighted there;  
Edged with silver and with gold,  
The clouds hang o'er in damask fold,  
And with such depth of amber light  
The west is dight,  
Where still a few rays slant,  
That even Heaven seems extravagant.



Watatic Hill

Lies on the horizon's sill  
Like a child's toy left overnight,  
And other duds to left and right,  
On the earth's edge, mountains and trees  
Stand as they were on air graven,  
Or as the vessels in a haven  
Await the morning breeze.  
I fancy even  
Through your defiles windeth the way to heaven;  
And yonder still, in spite of history's page,  
Linger the golden and the silver age;  
Upon the laboring gale  
The news of future centuries is brought,  
And of new dynasties of thought,  
From your remotest vale.

But special I remember thee,  
Wachusett, who like me  
Standest alone without society.  
Thy far blue eye,  
A remnant of the sky,  
Seen through the clearing or the gorge,  
Or from the windows of the forge,  
Doth leaven all it passes by.  
Nothing is true  
But stands 'tween me and you,  
Thou western pioneer,  
Who know'st not shame nor fear,  
By venturous spirit driven  
Under the eaves of heaven;

And canst expand thee there,  
And breathe enough of air?  
Even beyond the West  
Thou migratest,  
Into unclouded tracts,  
Without a pilgrim's axe,  
Cleaving thy road on high  
With thy well-tempered brow,  
And mak'st thyself a clearing in the sky.  
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,  
Thy pastime from thy birth;  
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other,  
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

*HERE LIES AN  
HONEST MAN*

Here lies an honest man,  
Rear-Admiral Van.

---

Faith, then ye have  
Two in one grave,  
For in his favor,  
Here too lies the Engraver.

*THE WESTERN WIND CAME LUMBERING IN*

The western wind came lumbering in,  
Bearing a faint Pacific din,  
Our evening mail, swift at the call  
Of its Postmaster General;  
Laden with news from Californ',  
Whate'er transpired hath since morn,  
How wags the world by brier and brake  
From hence to Athabasca Lake;—



*RUMORS FROM AN AEOLIAN HARP*

There is a vale which none hath seen,  
Where foot of man has never been,  
Such as here lives with toil and strife,  
An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth,  
Ere it descends upon the earth,  
And thither every deed returns,  
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,  
And poetry is yet unsung,  
For Virtue still adventures there,  
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,  
You still may hear its vesper bell,  
And tread of high-souled men go by,  
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

**AWAY! AWAY! AWAY! AWAY**

“Before each van  
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears  
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms  
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.”

---

Away! away! away! away!  
Ye have not kept your secret well,  
I will abide that other day,  
Those other lands ye tell.

Has time no leisure left for these,  
The acts that ye rehearse?  
Is not eternity a lease  
For better deeds than verse?

'Tis sweet to hear of heroes dead,  
To know them still alive,  
But sweeter if we earn their bread,  
And in us they survive.

Our life should feed the springs of fame  
With a perennial wave,  
As ocean feeds the babbling founts  
Which find in it their grave.

Ye skies drop gently round my breast,  
And be my corselet blue,  
Ye earth receive my lance in rest,  
My faithful charger you;

Ye stars my spear-heads in the sky,  
My arrow-tips ye are;  
I see the routed foemen fly,  
My bright spears fixed are.

Give me an angel for a foe,  
Fix now the place and time,  
And straight to meet him I will go  
Above the starry chime.

And with our clashing bucklers' clang  
The heavenly spheres shall ring,  
While bright the northern lights shall hang  
Beside our tourneying.

And if she lose her champion true,  
Tell Heaven not despair,  
For I will be her champion new,  
Her fame I will repair.

### *LOW-ANCHORED CLOUD*

Low-anchored cloud,  
Newfoundland air,  
Fountain-head and source of rivers,  
Dew-cloth, dream drapery,  
And napkin spread by fays;  
Drifting meadow of the air,  
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,  
And in whose fenny labyrinth  
The bittern booms and heron wades;  
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,  
Bear only perfumes and the scent  
Of healing herbs to just men's fields!



*MAN'S LITTLE ACTS ARE GRAND*

Man's little acts are grand,  
Beheld from land to land,  
There as they lie in time,  
Within their native clime.

Ships with the noontide weigh,  
And glide before its ray  
To some retired bay,  
Their haunt,

Whence, under tropic sun,  
Again they run,

Bearing gum Senegal and Tragacant.

For this was ocean meant,  
For this the sun was sent,  
And moon was lent,  
And winds in distant caverns pent.

*THE WAVES SLOWLY BEAT*

The waves slowly beat,  
Just to keep the noon sweet,  
And no sound is floated o'er,  
Save the mallet on shore,  
Which echoing on high  
Seems a-calking the sky.

*WOOF OF THE SUN, ETHEREAL GAUZE*

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,  
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,  
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,  
Last conquest of the eye;  
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,  
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,  
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,  
Breakers of air, billows of heat,  
Fine summer spray on inland seas;  
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged  
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,  
From heath or stubble rising without song;  
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

*WHERE GLEAMING FIELDS  
OF HAZE*

Where gleaming fields of haze  
Meet the voyageur's gaze,  
And above, the heated air  
Seems to make a river there,  
The pines stand up with pride  
By the Souhegan's side,  
And the hemlock and the larch  
With their triumphal arch  
Are waving o'er its march  
To the sea.

No wind stirs its waves,  
But the spirits of the braves  
Hov'ring o'er,  
Whose antiquated graves  
Its still water laves

On the shore.  
With an Indian's stealthy tread,  
It goes sleeping in its bed,  
Without joy or grief,  
Or the rustle of a leaf,  
Without a ripple or a billow,  
Or the sigh of a willow,  
From the Lyndeboro' hills  
To the Merrimack mills.  
With a louder din  
Did its current begin,



When melted the snow  
On the far mountain's brow,  
And the drops came together  
In that rainy weather.  
Experienced river,  
Hast thou flowed forever?  
Souhegan soundeth old,  
But the half is not told,  
What names hast thou borne,  
In the ages far gone,  
When the Xanthus and Meander  
Commenced to wander,  
Ere the black bear haunted  
    Thy red forest-floor,  
Or Nature had planted  
    The pines by thy shore?

***THIS IS MY CARNAC, WHOSE UNMEASURED DOME***

This is my Carnac, whose unmeasured dome  
Shelters the measuring art and measurer's home.  
Behold these flowers, let us be up with time,  
Not dreaming of three thousand years ago,  
Erect ourselves and let those columns lie,  
Not stoop to raise a foil against the sky.  
Where is the spirit of that time but in  
This present day, perchance the present line?  
Three thousand years ago are not ago,  
They are still lingering in this summer morn,  
And Memnon's Mother sprightly greets us now,  
Wearing her youthful radiance on her brow.  
If Carnac's columns still stand on the plain,  
To enjoy our opportunities they remain.

***TRUE KINDNESS IS A PURE DIVINE AFFINITY***

True kindness is a pure divine affinity,  
Not founded upon human consanguinity.  
It is a spirit, not a blood relation,  
Superior to family and station.

*LATELY, ALAS, I KNEW A GENTLE BOY*

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,  
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,  
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,  
But after manned him for her own strong-hold.

On every side he open was as day,  
That you might see no lack of strength within,  
For walls and ports do only serve alway  
For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Caesar was victorious,  
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame,  
In other sense this youth was glorious,  
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,  
When all was income of its own accord;  
For where he went none other was to see,  
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtile haze of summer,  
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,  
And revolutions works without a murmur,  
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,  
I quite forgot my homage to confess;  
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,  
I might have loved him had I loved him less.



Each moment as we nearer drew to each,  
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,  
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,  
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathize,  
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;  
And what avails it now that we are wise,  
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat,  
But I must tread my single way alone,  
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,  
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,  
For elegy has other subject none;  
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring  
Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;  
With fitting strain resound ye woods and fields;  
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me  
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

---

Is't then too late the damage to repair?  
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft  
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,  
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,  
Though it be scented in the morning air,  
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,  
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

## *THE ATLANTIDES*

The smothered streams of love, which flow  
More bright than Phlegethon, more low,  
Island us ever, like the sea,  
In an Atlantic mystery.  
Our fabled shores none ever reach,  
No mariner has found our beach,  
Scarcely our mirage now is seen,  
And neighboring waves with floating green,  
Yet still the oldest charts contain  
Some dotted outline of our main;  
In ancient times midsummer days  
Unto the western islands' gaze,  
To Teneriffe and the Azores,  
Have shown our faint and cloud-like shores.

But sink not yet, ye desolate isles,  
Anon your coast with commerce smiles,  
And richer freights ye'll furnish far  
Than Africa or Malabar.  
Be fair, be fertile evermore,  
Ye rumored but untrodden shore,  
Princes and monarchs will contend  
Who first unto your land shall send,  
And pawn the jewels of the crown  
To call your distant soil their own.

*MY LOVE MUST BE  
AS FREE*

My love must be as free  
As is the eagle's wing,  
Hovering o'er land and sea  
And everything.

I must not dim my eye  
In thy saloon,  
I must not leave my sky  
And nightly moon.

Be not the fowler's net  
Which stays my flight,  
And craftily is set  
T' allure the sight.

But be the favoring gale  
That bears me on,  
And still doth fill my sail  
When thou art gone.

I cannot leave my sky  
For thy caprice,  
True love would soar as high  
As heaven is.

The eagle would not brook  
Her mate thus won,  
Who trained his eye to look  
Beneath the sun.



*THE GOOD HOW CAN WE TRUST*

The Good how can we trust?  
Only the Wise are just.  
The Good we use,  
The Wise we cannot choose.  
These there are none above;  
The Good they know and love,  
But are not known again  
By those of lesser ken.  
They do not charm us with their eyes,  
But they transfix with their advice;  
No partial sympathy they feel,  
With private woe or private weal,  
But with the universe joy and sigh,  
Whose knowledge is their sympathy.

*NATURE DOTH HAVE HER DAWN  
EACH DAY*

Nature doth have her dawn each day,  
But mine are far between;  
Content, I cry, for sooth to say,  
Mine brightest are I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,  
Though it be her noontide,  
Her fairest field in shadow lies,  
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,  
Conversing with my mate,  
But if we interchange one ray,  
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,  
As from some eastern hill,  
A brighter morrow rise to me  
Than lieth in her skill.

As 'twere two summer days in one,  
Two Sundays come together,  
Our rays united make one sun,  
With fairest summer weather.

*LET SUCH PURE HATE  
STILL UNDERPROP*

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, and Lovers."

Let such pure hate still underprop  
Our love, that we may be  
Each other's conscience,  
And have our sympathy  
Mainly from thence.

We'll one another treat like gods,  
And all the faith we have  
In virtue and in truth, bestow  
On either, and suspicion leave  
To gods below.

Two solitary stars,—  
Unmeasured systems far  
Between us roll,  
But by our conscious light we are  
Determined to one pole.

What need confound the sphere,—  
Love can afford to wait,  
For it no hour's too late  
That witnesseth one duty's end,  
Or to another doth beginning lend.

It will subserve no use,  
More than the tints of flowers,  
Only the independent guest  
Frequents its bowers,  
Inherits its bequest.

No speech though kind has it,  
But kinder silence doles  
Unto its mates,  
By night consoles,  
By day congratulates.

What saith the tongue to tongue?  
What heareth ear of ear?  
By the decrees of fate  
From year to year,  
Does it communicate.

Pathless the gulf of feeling yawns,—  
No trivial bridge of words,  
Or arch of boldest span,  
Can leap the moat that girds  
The sincere man.

No show of bolts and bars  
Can keep the foeman out,  
Or 'scape his secret mine  
Who entered with the doubt  
That drew the line.



No warder at the gate  
Can let the friendly in,  
But, like the sun, o'er all  
He will the castle win,  
And shine along the wall.

There's nothing in the world I know  
That can escape from love,  
For every depth it goes below,  
And every height above.  
It waits as waits the sky,  
Until the clouds go by,  
Yet shines serenely on  
With an eternal day,  
Alike when they are gone,  
And when they stay.

Implacable is Love,—  
Foes may be bought or teased  
From their hostile intent,  
But he goes unappeased  
Who is on kindness bent.

## *THE INWARD MORNING*

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes  
Which outward nature wears,  
And in its fashion's hourly change  
It all things else repairs.

In vain I look for change abroad,  
And can no difference find,  
Till some new ray of peace uncalled  
Illumes my inmost mind.

What is it gilds the trees and clouds,  
And paints the heavens so gay,  
But yonder fast-abiding light  
With its unchanging ray?

Lo, when the sun streams through the wood,  
Upon a winter's morn,  
Where'er his silent beams intrude  
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known  
The morning breeze would come,  
Or humble flowers anticipate  
The insect's noonday hum,—

Till the new light with morning cheer  
From far streamed through the aisles,  
And nimbly told the forest trees  
For many stretching miles?

I've heard within my inmost soul  
Such cheerful morning news,  
In the horizon of my mind  
Have seen such orient hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,  
When the first birds awake,  
Are heard within some silent wood,  
Where they the small twigs break,

Or in the eastern skies are seen,  
Before the sun appears,  
The harbingers of summer heats  
Which from afar he bears.



*MY BOOKS I'D FAIN CAST OFF, I CANNOT READ*

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,  
'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large  
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,  
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,  
Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,  
What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,  
Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men.

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,  
What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,  
If juster battles are enacted now  
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,  
If red or black the gods will favor most,  
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,  
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,  
For now I've business with this drop of dew,  
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower,—  
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herd's-grass and wild oats was spread  
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use,  
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,  
And violets quite overtop my shoes.



And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,  
And gently swells the wind to say all's well,  
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,  
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell.

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats;  
But see that globe come rolling down its stem,  
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,  
And now it sinks into my garment's hem.

Drip drip the trees for all the country round,  
And richness rare distils from every bough,  
The wind alone it is makes every sound,  
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,  
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so,  
My dripping locks,—they would become an elf,  
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go.

## *THE POET'S DELAY*

In vain I see the morning rise,  
In vain observe the western blaze,  
Who idly look to other skies,  
Expecting life by other ways.

Amidst such boundless wealth without,  
I only still am poor within,  
The birds have sung their summer out,  
But still my spring does not begin.

Shall I then wait the autumn wind,  
Compelled to seek a milder day,  
And leave no curious nest behind,  
No woods still echoing to my lay?

*SALMON BROOK*

Salmon Brook,  
Penichook,  
Ye sweet waters of my brain,  
When shall I look,  
Or cast the hook,  
In your waves again?

Silver eels,  
Wooden creels,  
These the baits that still allure,  
And dragon-fly  
That floated by,  
May they still endure?

*I AM THE AUTUMNAL SUN*

I am the autumnal sun,  
With autumn gales my race is run;  
When will the hazel put forth its flowers,  
Or the grape ripen under my bowers?  
When will the harvest or the hunter's moon,  
Turn my midnight into mid-noon?

I am all sere and yellow,

And to my core mellow.

The mast is dropping within my woods,  
The winter is lurking within my moods,  
And the rustling of the withered leaf  
Is the constant music of my grief.



*I AM A PARCEL OF VAIN STRIVINGS TIED*

I am a parcel of vain strivings tied  
By a chance bond together,  
Dangling this way and that, their links  
Were made so loose and wide,  
Methinks,  
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots,  
And sorrel intermixed,  
Encircled by a wisp of straw  
Once coiled about their shoots,  
The law  
By which I'm fixed.

A nosegay which Time clutched from out  
Those fair Elysian fields,  
With weeds and broken stems, in haste,  
Doth make the rabble rout  
That waste  
The day he yields.

And here I bloom for a short hour unseen,  
Drinking my juices up,  
With no root in the land  
To keep my branches green,  
But stand  
In a bare cup.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem  
In mimicry of life,  
But ah! the children will not know,  
Till time has withered them,  
The woe  
With which they're rife.

But now I see I was not plucked for naught,  
And after in life's vase  
Of glass set while I might survive,  
But by a kind hand brought  
Alive  
To a strange place.

That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours,  
And by another year,  
Such as God knows, with freer air,  
More fruits and fairer flowers  
Will bear,  
While I droop here.

*ALL THINGS ARE CURRENT FOUND*

All things are current found  
On earthly ground,  
Spirits and elements  
Have their descents.

Night and day, year on year,  
High and low, far and near,  
These are our own aspects,  
These are our own regrets.

Ye gods of the shore,  
Who abide evermore,  
I see your far headland,  
Stretching on either hand;

I hear the sweet evening sounds  
From your undecaying grounds;  
Cheat me no more with time,  
Take me to your clime.

**WHO SLEEPS BY DAY AND WALKS BY NIGHT**

Who sleeps by day and walks by night,  
Will meet no spirit but some sprite.

**WE SHOULD NOT MIND IF ON OUR EAR THERE FELL**

We should not mind if on our ear there fell  
Some less of cunning, more of oracle.

**THEN SPEND AN AGE IN WHETTING THY DESIRE**

Then spend an age in whetting thy desire,  
Thou needs't not *hasten* if thou dost *stand fast*.

**THEREFORE A TORRENT OF SADNESS DEEP**

Therefore a torrent of sadness deep,  
Through the strains of thy triumph is heard to sweep.



*SUCH NEAR ASPECTS HAD WE*

Such near aspects had we  
Of our life's scenery.

*MY LIFE HAS BEEN THE POEM I WOULD HAVE WRIT*

My life has been the poem I would have writ,  
But I could not both live and utter it.

*WE SEE THE PLANET FALL*

We see the *planet* fall,  
And that is all.

The other couplets of the *Week* appear as collations in the poems of which they are a part. For "It doth expand my privacies" and "The work we choose should be our own" see "Inspiration"; for "Our uninquiring corpses lie more low" see "Travelling"; for "Men are by birth equal in this, that given" see "Poverty."

## VOYAGERS SONG

Gentle river, gentle river  
Swift as glid[e]s thy stream along,  
Many a bold Canadian voyageur,  
Bravely swelled the gay chanson

Thus of old our valiant fathers,  
Many a lagging year ago  
Gliding oer the rippling waters,  
Taught to banish care in song.

Now the sun's behind the willows,  
Now he gleams along the lake,  
Hark across the bounding billows  
Liquid songs the echoes wake.

Rise Apollo up before us,  
E'ne the lark's begun her lay  
Let us all in deafning chorus  
Praise the glorious king of day.

Thus we lead a life of pleasure,  
Thus we while the hours away,  
Thus we revel beyond measure,  
Gaily live we while we may.

*I LOVE A CARELESS STREAMLET*

"Long life and success to you."

Ubique.

I love a careless streamlet,  
That takes a mad-cap leap,  
And like a sparkling beamlet  
Goes dashing down the steep.

---

Like torrents of the mountain  
We've coursed along the lea,  
From many a crystal fountain  
Toward the far-distant sea.

And now we've gained life's valley,  
And through the lowlands roam,  
No longer may'st thou dally,  
No longer spout and foam.

May pleasant meads await thee,  
Where thou may'st freely roll  
Towards that bright heavenly sea,  
Thy resting place and goal.

And when thou reach'st life's down-hill,  
So gentle be thy stream,  
As would not turn a grist-mill  
Without the aid of steam.

## TO THE COMET

My sincerity doth surpass  
The pretence of optic glass.

Say what are the highlands yonder  
Which do keep the spheres asunder  
The streams of light which centre in our sun  
And those which from some other system run?

Distinguished stranger, system ranger,  
Plenipotentiary to our sphere,  
Dost thou know of any danger,  
War or famine near?

Special envoy, foreign minister,  
From the empire of the sky,  
Dost thou threaten aught that's sinister  
By thy course on high?

Runner of the firmament  
On what errand wast thou sent,  
Art thou some great general's scout  
Come to spy our weakness out?  
Sculling thy way without a sail,  
Mid the stars and constellations,  
The pioneerer of a tail  
Through the stary nations.  
Thou celestial privateer  
We entreat thee come not near.



## *FRIENDSHIP*

I think awhile of Love, and while I think,  
Love is to me a world,  
Sole meat and sweetest drink,  
And close connecting link  
Tween heaven and earth.

I only know it is, not how or why,  
My greatest happiness;  
However hard I try,  
Not if I were to die,  
Can I explain.

I fain would ask my friend how it can be,  
But when the time arrives,  
Then Love is more lovely  
Than anything to me,  
And so I'm dumb.

For if the truth were known, Love cannot speak,  
But only thinks and does;  
Though surely out 'twill leak  
Without the help of Greek,  
Or any tongue.

A man may love the truth and practise it,  
Beauty he may admire,  
And goodness not omit,  
As much as may befit  
To reverence.

But only when these three together meet,  
As they always incline,  
And make one soul the seat,  
And favorite retreat  
Of loveliness;

When under kindred shape, like loves and hates  
And a kindred nature,  
Proclaim us to be mates,  
Exposed to equal fates  
Eternally;

And each may other help, and service do,  
Drawing Love's bands more tight,  
Service he ne'er shall rue  
While one and one make two,  
And two are one;

In such case only doth man fully prove  
Fully as man can do,  
What power there is in Love  
His inmost soul to move  
Resistlessly.

---

Two sturdy oaks I mean, which side by side,  
Withstand the winter's storm,  
And spite of wind and tide,  
Grow up the meadow's pride,  
For both are strong

Above they barely touch, but undermined  
Down to their deepest source,  
Admiring you shall find  
Their roots are intertwined  
Insep'rably.

## THE CLIFFS & SPRINGS

When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale,  
And now no more the woodman plies his axe,  
Nor mower whets his scythe,  
Somewhat it is, sole sojourner on earth,  
To hear the veery on her oaken perch  
Ringing her modest trill—  
Sole sound of all the din that makes a world,  
And I sole ear.  
Fondly to nestle me in that sweet melody,  
And own a kindred soul, speaking to me  
From out the depths of universal being.  
O'er birch and hazle, through the sultry air,  
Comes that faint sound this way,  
On Zephyr borne, straight to my ear.  
No longer time or place, nor faintest trace  
Of earth, the landscape's shimmer is my only space,  
Sole remnant of a world.  
Anon that throat has done, and familiar sounds  
Swell strangely on the breeze, the low of cattle,  
And the novel cries of sturdy swains  
That plod the neighboring vale—  
And I walk once more confounded a denizen of earth.



## *THE BLUEBIRDS*

In the midst of the poplar that stands by our door,  
We planted a bluebird box,  
And we hoped before the summer was o'er  
A transient pair to coax.

One warm summer's day the bluebirds came  
And lighted on our tree,  
But at first the wand'ers were not so tame  
But they were afraid of me.

They seemed to come from the distant south,  
Just over the Walden wood,  
And they skimmed it along with open mouth  
Close by where the bellows stood.

Warbling they swept round the distant cliff,  
And they warbled it over the lea,  
And over the blacksmith's shop in a jiff  
Did they come warbling to me.

They came and sat on the box's top  
Without looking into the hole,  
And only from this side to that did they hop,  
As 'twere a common well-pole.

Methinks I had never seen them before,  
Nor indeed had they seen me,  
Till I chanced to stand by our back door,  
And they came to the poplar tree.

In course of time they built their nest  
And reared a happy brood,  
And every morn they piped their best  
As they flew away to the wood.

Thus wore the summer hours away  
To the bluebirds and to me,  
And every hour was a summer's day,  
So pleasantly lived we.

They were a world within themselves,  
And I a world in me,  
Up in the tree—the little elves—  
With their callow family.

One morn the wind blowed cold and strong,  
And the leaves when whirling away;  
The birds prepared for their journey long  
That raw and gusty day.

Boreas came blust'ring down from the north,  
And ruffled their azure smocks,  
So they launched them forth, though somewhat loth,  
By way of the old Cliff rocks.

Meanwhile the earth jogged steadily on  
In her mantle of purest white,  
And anon another spring was born  
When winter was vanished quite.

And I wandered forth o'er the steamy earth,  
And gazed at the mellow sky,  
But never before from the hour of my birth  
Had I wandered so thoughtfully.

For never before was the earth so still,  
And never so mild was the sky,  
The river, the fields, the woods, and the hill,  
Seemed to heave an audible sigh.

I felt that the heavens were all around,  
And the earth was all below,  
As when in the ears there rushes a sound  
Which thrills you from top to toe.

I dreamed that I was an waking thought—  
A something I hardly knew—  
Not a solid piece, nor an empty nought,  
But a drop of morning dew.

'Twas the world and I at a game of bo-peep,  
As a man would dodge his shadow,  
An idea becalmed in eternity's deep—  
'Tween Lima and Segraddo.

Anon a faintly warbled note  
From out the azure deep,  
Into my ears did gently float  
As is the approach of sleep.



It thrilled but startled not my soul;  
Across my mind strange mem'ries gleamed,  
As often distant scenes u[n]roll  
When we have lately dreamed

The bluebird had come from the distant South  
To his box in the poplar tree,  
And he opened wide his slender mouth,  
On purpose to sing to me.



## MAY MORNING

The school boy loitered on his way to school,  
Scorning to live so rare a day by rule.  
So mild the air a pleasure 'twas to breathe,  
For what seems heaven above was earth beneath.

Soured neighbors chatted by the garden pale,  
Nor quarrelled who should drive the needed nail—  
The most unsocial made new friends that day,  
As when the sun shines husbandmen make hay

How long I slept I know not, but at last  
I felt my consciousness returning fast,  
For Zephyr rustled past with leafy tread,  
And heedlessly with one heel grazed my head.

My eyelids opened on a field of blue,  
For close above a nodding violet grew,  
A part of heaven it seemed, which one could scent,  
Its blue commingling with the firmament.

## WALDEN

—True, our converse a stranger is to speech,  
Only the practised ear can catch the surging words,  
That break and die upon thy pebbled lips.  
Thy flow of thought is noiseless as the lapse of thy  
own waters,  
Wafted as is the morning mist up from thy surface,  
So that the passive Soul doth breathe it in,  
And is infected with the truth thou wouldst express.

E'en the remotest stars have come in troops  
And stooped low to catch the benediction  
Of thy countenance. Oft as the day came round,  
Impartial has the sun exhibited himself  
Before thy narrow skylight—nor has the moon  
For cycles failed to roll this way  
As oft as elsewhither, and tell thee of the night.  
No cloud so rare but hitherward it stalked,  
And in thy face looked doubly beautiful.  
O! tell me what the winds have writ within these  
thousand years,  
On the blue vault that spans thy flood—  
Or sun transferred and delicately reprinted  
For thy own private reading. Somewhat  
Within these latter days I've read,  
But surely there was much that would have thrilled  
the Soul,

Which human eye saw not  
I would give much to read that first bright page,  
Wet from a virgin press, when Eurus—Boreas—  
And the host of airy quill-drivers  
First dipped their pens in mist.

**TRUTH-GOODNESS-BEAUTY—  
THOSE CELESTIAL THRINS**

Truth—Goodness—Beauty—those celestial thrins,  
Continually are born; e'en now the Universe,  
With thousand throats—and eke with greener smiles,  
Its joy confesses at their recent birth.



*IN THE BUSY STREETS, DOMAINS OF TRADE*

In the busy streets, domains of trade,  
Man is a surly porter, or a vain and hectoring bully,  
Who can claim no nearer kindredship with me  
Than brotherhood by law.

*I KNEW A MAN BY SIGHT*

I knew a man by sight,  
A blameless wight,  
Who, for a year or more,  
Had daily passed my door,  
Yet converse none had had with him.

I met him in a lane,  
Him and his cane,  
About three miles from home,  
Where I had chanced to roam,  
And volumes stared at him, and he at me.

In a more distant place  
I glimpsed his face,  
And bowed instinctively;  
Starting he bowed to me,  
Bowed simultaneously, and passed along.

Next, in a foreign land  
I grasped his hand,  
And had a social chat,  
About this thing and that,  
As I had known him well a thousand years.

Late in a wilderness  
I shared his mess,  
For he had hardships seen,  
And I a wanderer been;  
He was my bosom friend, and I was his.

And as, methinks, shall all,  
Both great and small,  
That ever lived on earth,  
Early or late their birth,  
Stranger and foe, one day each other know.

## *CLIFFS*

The loudest sound that burdens here the breeze  
Is the wood's whisper; 'tis when we choose to list  
Audible sound, and when we list not,  
It is calm profound. Tongues were provided  
But to vex the ear with superficial thoughts.  
When deeper thoughts upswell, the jarring discord  
Of harsh speech is hushed, and senses seem  
As little as may be to share the extacy.



## MY BOOTS

Anon with gaping fearlessness they quaff  
The dewy nectar with a natural thirst,  
Or wet their leathern lungs where cranberries lurk,  
With sweeter wine than Chian, Lesbian, or Falernian  
far.

Theirs was the inward lustre that bespeaks  
An open sole—unknowing to exclude  
The cheerful day—a worthier glory far  
Than that which gilds the outmost rind with darkness  
visible—

Virtues that fast abide through lapse of years,  
Rather rubbed in than off.

## NOON

What time the bittern, solitary bird,  
Hides now her head amid the whispering fern,  
And not a paddock vexes all the shore—  
Nor feather ruffles the incumbent air,  
Save where the wagtail interrupts the noon.

## *THE THAW*

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears—  
Her tears of joy that only faster flowed,

Fain would I stretch me by the hig[h]way side,  
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,  
That mingled soul and body with the tide,  
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I alas nor trickle can nor fume,  
One jot to forward the great work of Time,  
'Tis mine to hearken while these ply the loom,  
So shall my silence with their music chime.

*LAST NIGHT AS I LAY GAZING  
WITH SHUT EYES*

Last night as I lay gazing with shut eyes  
    Into the golden land of dreams,  
I thought I gazed adown a quiet reach  
    Of land and water prospect,  
    Whose low beach  
Was peopled with the now subsiding hum  
Of happy industry—whose work is done.

And as I turned me on my pillow o'er,  
I heard the lapse of waves upon the shore,  
Distinct as it had been at broad noonday,  
And I were wandering at Rockaway.



## *LOVE*

We two that planets erst had been  
Are now a double star,  
And in the heavens may be seen,  
Where that we fixed are.

Yet whirled with subtle power along,  
Into new space we enter,  
And evermore with spherul song  
Revolve about one centre.

*'TWILL SOON APPEAR IF WE BUT LOOK*

'Twill soon appear if we but look  
At evening into earth's day book,  
Which way the great account doth stand  
Between the heavens and the land.

## *THE PEAL OF THE BELLS*

When the world grows old by the chimney side,  
Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide—  
Where over the water, and over the land,  
The bells are booming on either hand.

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,  
And awhile they swing to the same old song,  
And the metal goes round 't a single bound,  
A-lulling the fields with i[t]s measured sound—  
Till the tired tongue falls with a lengthened boom,  
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.  
Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,  
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,  
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,  
And the breezes waft the loud ding-dong along.

When the echo has reached me in this lone vale,  
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail,  
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,  
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

I am on the alert for some wonderful Thing,  
W[h]ich somewhere's a taking place,  
'Tis perchance the salute which our planet doth ring  
When it meeteth another in space.

## THE "BOOK OF GEMS"

—With cunning plates the polished leaves were decked,  
Each one a window to the poet's world,  
So rich a prospect that you might suspect  
In that small space all paradise unfurled.  
It was a right delightful road to go,  
    marching through pastures of such fair herbage,  
O'er hill and dale it lead, and to and fro,  
From bard to bard, making an easy stage.

Where ever and anon I slaked my thirst  
Like a tired traveller at some poet's well,  
Which from the teeming ground did bubbling burst,  
And tinkling thence adown the page it fell.  
Still through the leaves its music you might hear,  
Till other springs fell faintly on the ear.



## *THE ASSABET*

Up this pleasant stream let's row  
For the livelong summer's day,  
Sprinkling foam where'er we go  
In wreaths as white as driven snow—  
Ply the oars, away! away!

Now we glide along the shore,  
Chuckling lillies as we go,  
While the yellow-sanded floor  
Doggedly resists the oar,  
Like some turtle dull and slow.

Now we stem the middle tide  
Ploughing through the deepest soil,  
Ridges pile on either side,  
While we through the furrow glide,  
Reaping bubbles for our toil.

Dew before and drought behind,  
Onward all doth seem to fly;  
Nought contents the eager mind,  
Only rapids now are kind,  
Forward are the earth and sky.

Sudden music strikes the ear,  
Leaking out from yonder bank,  
Fit such voyagers to cheer—  
Sure there must be naiads here,  
Who have kindly played this prank.

There I know the cunning pack  
Where yon self-sufficient rill  
All its telltale hath kept back,  
Through the meadows held its clack,  
And now bubbleth its fill.

Silent flows the parent stream,  
And if rocks do lie below  
Smothers with her waves the din,  
As it were a youthful sin,  
Just as still and just as slow.

But this gleeful little rill,  
Purling round its storied pebble,  
Tinkles to the selfsame tune  
From December until June,  
Nor doth any drought enfeeble.

See the sun behind the willows,  
Rising through the golden haze,  
How he gleams along the billows—  
Their white crests the easy pillows  
Of his dew besprinkled rays.

Forward press we to the dawning,  
For Aurora leads the way,  
Sultry noon and twilight scorning,  
In each dew drop of the morning  
Lies the promise of a day.

Rivers from the sun do flow,  
Springing with the dewy morn,  
Voyageurs 'gainst time do row,  
Idle noon nor sunset know,  
Ever even with the dawn.

Since that first away! away!  
Many a lengthy league we've rowed,  
Still the sparrow on the spray,  
Hastes to usher in the day  
With her simple stanza'd ode.

## *THE BREEZE'S INVITATION*

Come let's roam the breezy pastures,  
Where the freest zephyrs blow,  
Batten on the oak tree's rustle,  
And the pleasant insect bustle,  
Dripping with the streamlet's flow.

What if I no wings do wear,  
Thro' this solid seeming air  
I can skim like any swallow  
Who so dareth let her follow,  
And we'll be a jovial pair.

Like two careless swifts let's sail,  
Zephyrus shall think for me—  
Over hill and over dale,  
Riding on the easy gale,  
We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree  
Winnowing the buxom air,  
You a gnat and I a bee,  
With our merry minstrelsy  
We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen,  
Till the sun doth go to bed,  
I the king and you the queen  
Of that peaceful little green,  
Without any subject's aid.



To our music Time will linger,  
And earth open wide her ear,  
Nor shall any need to tarry  
To immortal verse to marry  
Such sweet music as he'll hear.

*LOVES FAREWELL*

Light hearted, careless, shall I take my way,  
When I to thee this being have resigned,  
Well knowing where upon a future day,  
With usurer's craft, more than myself to find.

*EACH MORE MELODIOUS NOTE  
I HEAR*

Each more melodious note I hear  
Brings this reproach to me,  
That I alone afford the ear,  
Who would the music be.

*I WAS BORN UPON THY  
BANK RIVER*

I was born upon thy bank river  
My blood flows in thy stream  
And thou meanderest forever  
At the bottom of my dream



## *THE FISHER'S SON*

I know the world where land and water meet,  
By yonder hill abutting on the main,  
One while I hear the waves incessant beat,  
Then turning round survey the land again.

Within a humble cot that looks to sea  
Daily I breathe this curious warm life,  
Beneath a friendly haven's sheltering lea  
My noiseless day with myst'ry still is rife.

'Tis here, they say, my simple life began,  
And easy credit to the tale I lend,  
For well I know 'tis here I am a man,  
But who will simply tell me of the end?

These eyes fresh opened spied the far off Sea,  
Which like a silent godfather did stand,  
Nor uttered one explaining word to me,  
But introduced straight godmother Sand.

And yonder still stretches that silent main,  
With many glancing ships besprinkled o'er,  
And earnest still I gaze and gaze again  
Upon the self same waves and friendly shore

Till like a watery humor on the eye  
It still appears whichever way I turn,  
Its silent waste and mute oerarching sky  
With close shut eyes I clearly still discern.

And yet with lingering doubt I haste each morn  
To see if Ocean still my gaze will greet,  
And with each day once more to life am born,  
And tread the earth once more with tott'ring feet.

---

My years are like a stroll upon the beach,  
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;  
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,  
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

Infinite work my hands find there to do,  
Gathering the relics which the waves up cast;  
Each tempest scours the deep for something new,  
And every time the strangest is the last.

My sole employment 'tis and scrupulous care,  
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,  
Each smoother pebble and each shell more rare  
Which ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore,  
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea,  
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed oer  
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

My neighbors sometimes come with lumb'ring carts,  
As if they wished my pleasant toil to share,  
But straightway go again to distant marts  
For only weeds and ballast are their care.



'Tis by some strange coincidence if I  
Make common cause with ocean when he storms  
Who can so well support a separate sky,  
And people it with multitude of forms.

Oft in the stillness of the night I hear  
Some restless bird presage the coming din,  
And distant murmurs faintly strike my ear  
From some bold bluff projecting far within.

My stillest depths straightway do inly heave  
More genially than rests the summer's calm,  
The howling winds through my soul's cordage grieve,  
Till every shelf and ledge gives the alarm.

Oft at some ruling star my tide has swelled,  
The sea can scarcely brag more wrecks than I,  
Ere other influence my waves has quelled  
The staunchest bark that floats is high and dry.

*I'M GUIDED IN THE DARKEST NIGHT*

I'm guided in the darkest night  
By flashes of auroral light,  
Which over dart thy eastern home  
And teach me not in vain to roam.  
Thy steady light on t'other side  
Pales the sunset, makes day abide,  
And after sunrise stays the dawn,  
Forerunner of a brighter morn.

There is no being here to me  
But staying here to be  
When others laugh I am not glad,  
When others cry I am not sad,  
But be they grieved or be they merry  
I'm supernumerary.  
I am a miser without blame  
Am conscience stricken without shame.  
An idler am I without leisure,  
A busy body without pleasure.  
I did not think so bright a day  
Would issue in so dark a night.  
I did not think such sober play  
Would leave me in so sad a plight,  
And I should be most sorely spent  
Where first I was most innocent.  
I thought by loving all beside  
To prove to you my love was wide,  
And by the rites I soared above  
To show you my peculiar love.



## ***FRIENDSHIP***

Now we are partners in such legal trade,  
We'll look to the beginnings, not the ends,  
Nor to pay day—knowing true wealth is made  
For current stock and not for dividends.

*ON THE SUN COMING OUT IN THE AFTERNOON*

Methinks all things have travelled since you shined,  
But only Time, and clouds, Time's team, have moved;  
Again foul weather shall not change my mind,  
But In the shade I will believe what in the sun I loved.

*THEY WHO PREPARE MY EVENING MEAL BELOW*

They who prepare my evening meal below  
Carelessly hit the kettle as they go  
With tongs or shovel,  
And ringing round and round,  
Out of this hovel  
It makes an eastern temple by the sound.

At first I thought a cow-bell right at hand  
Mid birches sounded o'er the open land,  
Where I plucked flowers  
Many years ago,  
Spending midsummer hours  
With such secure delight they hardly seemed to flow.

*MY GROUND IS HIGH*

My ground is high,  
But 'tis not dry,  
What you call dew  
Comes filtering through;  
Though in the sky,  
It still is nigh;  
Its soil is blue  
And virgin too.



*IF FROM YOUR PRICE YE  
WILL NOT SWERVE*

If from your price ye will not swerve,  
Why then Ill think the gods reserve  
A greater bargain there above,  
Out of their sup'rabundant love,  
Have meantime better for me cared,  
And so will get my stock prepared,  
Plows of new pattern, hoes the same,  
Designed a different soil to tame,  
And sow my seed broadcast in air,  
Certain to reap my harvest there.

## *FRIENDSHIP'S STEADFASTNESS*

True friendship is so firm a league  
That's maintenance falls into the even tenor  
Of our lives, and is no tie,  
But the continuance of our lifes thread.

If I would safely keep this new got pelf,  
I have no care henceforth but watch myself,  
For lo! it goes untended from my sight,  
Waxes and wanes secure with the safe star of night.

See with what liberal step it makes its way,  
As we could well afford to let it stray  
Throughout the universe, with the sun & moon,  
Which would dissolve allegiance as soon.

Shall I concern myself for fickleness,  
And undertake to make my friends more sure,  
When the great gods out of sheer kindness,  
Gave me this office for a sinecure?

***DEATH CANNOT COME  
TOO SOON***

Death cannot come too soon  
Where it can come at all,  
But always is too late  
Unless the fates it call.

## INDEPENDENCE

My life more civil is and free  
Than any civil polity.

Ye princes keep your realms  
And circumscribed power,  
Not wide as are my dreams,  
Nor rich as is this hour.

What can ye give which I have not?  
What can ye take which I have got?  
Can ye defend the dangerless?  
Can ye inherit nakedness?

To all true wants time's ear is deaf,  
Penurious states lend no relief  
Out of their pelf—  
But a free soul—thank God—  
Can help itself.

Be sure your fate  
Doth keep apart its state—  
Not linked with any band—  
Even the nobles of the land

In tented fields with cloth of gold—  
No place doth hold  
But is more chivalrous than they are.  
And sigheth for a nobler war.  
A finer strain its trumpet rings—  
A brighter gleam its armor flings.



The life that I aspire to live  
No man proposeth me—  
No trade upon the street  
Wears its emblazonry.

## OUR COUNTRY

It is a noble country where we dwell,  
Fit for a stalwart race to summer in;  
From Madawaska to Red River raft,  
From Florid keys to the Missouri forks,  
See what unwearied (and) copious streams  
Come tumbling to the east and southern shore,  
To find a man stand on their lowland banks:  
Behold the innumerable rivers and the licks  
Where he may drink to quench his summer's thirst,  
And the broad corn and rice fields yonder, where  
His hands may gather for his winter's store.

See the fair reaches of the northern lakes  
To cool his summer with their inland breeze,  
And the long slumbering Appalachian range  
Offering its slopes to his unwearied knees!  
See what a long-lipped sea doth clip the shores,  
And noble strands where navies may find port;  
See Boston, Baltimore, and New York stand  
Fair in the sunshine on the eastern sea,  
And yonder too the fair green prairie.

See the red race with sullen step retreat,  
Emptying its graves, striking the wigwam tent,  
And where the rude camps of its brethren stand,  
Dotting the distant green, their herds around;  
In serried ranks, and with a distant clang,  
Their fowl fly o'er, bound to the northern lakes,  
Whose plashing waves invite their webbed feet.

Such the fair reach and prospect of the land,  
The journeying summer creeps from south to north  
With wearied feet, resting in many a vale;  
Its length doth tire the seasons to o'ercome,  
Its widening breadth doth make the sea-breeze pause  
And spend its breath against the mountain's side:  
Still serene Summer paints the southern fields,  
While the stern Winter reigns on northern hills.

Look nearer,—know the lineaments of each face,—  
Learn the far-travelled race, and find here met  
The so long gathering congress of the world!  
The Afric race brought here to curse its fate,  
Erin to bless,—the patient German too,  
Th' industrious Swiss, the fickle, sanguine Gaul,  
And manly Saxon, leading all the rest.  
All things invite this earth's inhabitants  
To rear their lives to an unheard-of height,  
And meet the expectation of the land;  
To give at length the restless race of man  
A pause in the long westering caravan.



*THE MOON NOW RISES TO HER ABSOLUTE RULE*

The moon now rises to her absolute rule,  
And the husbandman and hunter  
Acknowledge her for their mistress.  
Asters and golden reign in the fields  
And the life everlasting withers not.  
The fields are reaped and shorn of their pride  
But [?] an inward verdure still crowns them  
The thistle scatters its down on the pool  
And yellow leaves clothe the river—  
And nought disturbs the serious life of men.  
But behind the sheaves and under the sod  
There lurks a ripe fruit which the reapers have not  
gathered  
The true harvest of the year—the boreal[?] fruit  
Which it bears forever.  
With fondness annually watering and maturing it.  
But man never severs the stalk  
Which bears this palatable fruit.



*MY FRIENDS, WHY SHOULD WE LIVE*

My friends, why should we live?  
Life is an idle war a toilsome peace;  
To-day I would not give  
One small consent for its securest ease.

Shall we out-wear the year  
In our pavilions on its dusty plain  
And yet no signal hear  
To strike our tents and take the road again?

Or else drag up the slope  
The heavy ordnance of nature's train?  
Useless but in the hope,  
Some far remote and heavenward hill to gain.

*I MARK THE SUMMER'S SWIFT DECLINE*

I mark the summer's swift decline  
The springing sward its grave clothes weaves  
Whose rustling woods the gales confine  
The aged year turns on its couch of leaves.

Oh could I catch the sounds remote  
Could I but tell to human ear—  
The strains which on the breezes float  
And sing the requiem of the dying year.

***METHINKS THAT BY A  
STRICT BEHAVIOR***

Methinks that by a strict behavior  
I could elicit back the brightest star  
That lurks behind a cloud.

*I HAVE ROLLED NEAR SOME  
OTHER SPIRITS PATH*

I have rolled near some other spirits path  
And with a pleased anxiety have felt  
Its purer influence on my opaque mass  
But always was I doomed to learn, alas!  
I had scarce changed its sidereal time.



## TRAVELLING

How little curious is man  
He has not searched his mystery a span  
But dreams of mines of treasure  
Which he neglects to measure.

For three score years and ten  
Walks to and fro amid his fellow men  
O'er this small tract of continental land  
And never uses a divining wand.

Our uninquiring corpses lie more low  
Than our life's curiosity doth go  
Our ambitious steps ne'er climb so high  
As in their daily sport the sparrows fly

And yonder cloud's borne farther in a day  
Than our most vagrant steps may ever stray.  
Surely, O Lord, he has not greatly erred,  
Who has so little from his threshold stirred.

He wanders through this low and shallow world  
Scarcely his loftier thoughts and hopes unfurled,  
Through this low walled world, where his huge sin  
Has hardly room to rest and harbor in.

He wanders round until his end draws nigh  
And then lays down his aged head to dye  
And this is life, this is that famous strife.

*ON FIELDS OER WHICH THE REAPER'S  
HAND HAS PASS[E]D*

On fields oer which the reaper's hand has pass[e]d,  
Lit by the harvest moon and autumn sun,  
My thoughts like stubble floating in the wind  
And of such fineness as October airs,  
There after harvest could I glean my life  
A richer harvest reaping without toil,  
And weaving gorgeous fancies at my will  
In subtler webs than finest summer haze.

*TO A MARSH HAWK IN SPRING*

There is health in thy gray wing  
Health of nature's furnishing.  
Say thou modern-winged antique,  
Was thy mistress ever sick?  
In each heaving of thy wing  
Thou dost health and leisure bring,  
Thou dost waive disease & pain  
And resume new life again.

## *GREAT FRIEND*

I walk in nature still alone  
And know no one  
Discern no lineament nor feature  
Of any creature.

Though all the firmament  
Is oer me bent,  
Yet still I miss the grace  
Of an intelligent and kindred face.

I still must seek the friend  
Who does with nature blend,  
Who is the person in her mask,  
He is the man I ask.

Who is the expression of her meaning,  
Who is the uprightness of her leaning,  
Who is the grown child of her weaning

The center of this world,  
The face of nature,  
The site of human life,  
Some sure foundation  
And nucleus of a nation—  
At least a private station.

We twain would walk together  
Through every weather,  
And see this aged nature,  
Go with a bending stature.



***YET LET US THANK THE  
PURBLIND RACE***

Yet let us Thank the purblind race,  
Who still have thought it good  
With lasting stone to mark the place  
Where braver men have stood.

In concord, town of quiet name  
And quiet fame as well,

*IVE SEEN YE, SISTERS, ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE*

Ive seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side  
When your green mantles fluttered in the wind  
Ive seen your foot-prints on the lakes smooth shore  
Lesser than man's, a more ethereal trace,  
I have heard of ye as some far-famed race—  
Daughters of gods whom I should one day meet—  
Or mothers I might say of all our race.  
I reverence your natures so like mine  
Yet strangely different, like but still unlike  
Thou only stranger that hast crossed my path  
Accept my hospitality—let me hear  
The message which thou bring'st  
    Made different from me  
    Perchance thou't made to be  
    The creature of a different destiny.  
I know not who ye are that meekly stand  
Thus side by side with man in every land.  
When did ye form alliance with our race  
Ye children of the moon who in placid nights  
Vaulted upon the hills and sought this earth.  
Reveal that which I fear ye can not tell  
Wherein ye are not I, wherein ye dwell  
Where I can never come.  
What boots it that I do regard ye so  
Does it make suns to shine or crops to grow?  
What boots that I never should forget  
Thee[?], I have sisters sitting for me yet

And what are sisters  
The robust man who can so stoutly strive  
In this bleak world is hardly kept alive.  
And who is it protects *ye* smooths *your* way

*YE DO COMMAND ME TO ALL VIRTUE EVER*

Ye do command me to all virtue ever  
And simple truth the law by which we live  
Methinks that I can trust your clearer sense  
And your immediate knowledge of the truth.  
I would obey your influence—one with fate



*ON SHOULDERS WHIRLED IN SOME  
ECCENTRIC ORBIT*

On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit  
Just by old Paestum's temples and the perch  
Where Time doth plume his wings.

## FOG

Dull water spirit—and Protean god  
Descended cloud fast anchored to the earth  
That drawest too much air for shallow coasts  
Thou ocean branch that flowest to the sun  
Incense of earth, perfumed with flowers—  
Spirit of lakes and rivers, seas and rills  
Come to revisit now thy native scenes  
Night thoughts of earth—dream drapery  
Dew cloth and fairy napkin  
Thou wind-blown meadow of the air.

*BROTHER WHERE DOST THOU DWELL*

Brother where dost thou dwell?  
What sun shines for thee now?  
Dost thou indeed farewell?  
As we wished here below.

What season didst thou find?  
'Twas winter here.  
Are not the fates more kind  
Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again  
As in thy youthful years?  
And was that ugly pain  
The summit of thy fears?

Yet thou wast cheery still,  
They could not quench thy fire,  
Thou didst abide their will,  
And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look  
To feel thy presence near?  
Along the neighboring brook  
May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink  
Of yonder river's tide?  
And may I ever think  
That thou art at my side?

What bird wilt thou employ  
To bring me word of thee?  
For it would give them joy,  
'Twould give them liberty,  
To serve their former lord  
With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain has mixed with their song,  
They've slower built their nests,  
Since thou art gone  
Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch—the thrush,  
I used to hear?  
Ah! they could well abide  
The dying year.

Now they no more return,  
I hear them not;  
They have remained to mourn,  
Or else forgot.



*EPITAPH ON PURSY*

Traveller, this is no prison,  
He is not dead, but risen.

Then is there need,  
To fill his grave,  
And truth to save,  
That we should read,—  
In Pursy's favor  
Here lies the engraver.

*EP[ITAPH] ON THE WORLD*

Here lies the body of this world,  
Whose soul alas to hell is hurled.  
This golden youth long since was past,  
Its silver manhood went as fast,  
And iron age drew on at last;  
'Tis vain its character to tell,  
The several fates which it befell,  
What year it died, when 'twill arise,  
We only know that here it lies.

*EPITAPH ON AN ENGRAVER*

By death's favor  
Here lies the engraver  
And now I think o't  
Where lies he not?  
If the archangel look but where he lies  
He ne'er will get translated to the skies.

## *THE JUST MADE PERFECT*

A stately music rises on my ear,  
Borne on the breeze from some adjacent vale;  
A host of knights, my own true ancestors,  
Tread to the lofty strains and pass away  
In long procession; to this music's sound  
The Just move onward in deep serried ranks,  
With looks serene of hope, and gleaming brows,  
As if they were the temples of the Day.

Gilt by an unseen sun's resplendent ray  
They firmly move, sure as the lapse of Time;  
Departed worth, leaving these trivial fields  
Where sedate valor finds no worthy aim,  
And still is Fame the noblest cause of all.

Forward they press and with exalted eye,  
As if their road, which seems a level plain,  
Did still ascend, and were again subdued  
'Neath their proud feet. Forward they move, and leave  
The sun and moon and stars alone behind:  
And now, by the still fainter strains, I know  
They surely pass; and soon their quivering harp,  
And faintly clashing cymbal, will have ceased  
To feed my ear.

It is the steadiest motion eye hath seen,  
A Godlike progress; e'en the hills and rocks  
Do forward come, so to congratulate  
Their feet; the rivers eddy backward, and  
The waves recurl to accompany their march.



Onward they move, like to the life of man,  
Which cannot rest, but goes without delay  
Right to the gates of Death, not losing time  
In its majestic tread to Eternity,  
As if Man's blood, a river, flowed right on  
Far as the eye could reach, to the Heart of hearts,  
Nor eddied round about these complex limbs.

'Tis the slow march of life,—I feel the feet  
Of tiny drops go pattering through *my* veins;  
*Their* arteries flow with an Assyrian pace,  
And empires rise and fall beneath their stride.

Still, as they move, flees the horizon wall;  
The low-roofed sky o'erarches their true path;  
For they have caught at last the pace of Heaven,  
Their great Commander's true and timely tread.

Lo! how the sky before them is cast up  
Into an archèd road, like to the gallery  
Of the small mouse that bores the meadow's turf:  
Chapels of ease swift open o'er the path,  
And domes continuous span the lengthening way.

*TELL ME YE WISE ONES IF YE CAN*

Tell me ye wise ones if ye can  
Whither and whence the race of man.  
For I have seen his slender clan  
Clinging to hoar hills with their feet  
Threading the forest for their meat  
Moss and lichens bark & grain  
They rake together with might & main  
And they digest them with anxiety & pain.  
I meet them in their rags and unwashed hair  
Instructed to eke out their scanty fare  
Brave race—with a yet humbler prayer  
Beggars they are aye on the largest scale  
They beg their daily bread at heavens door  
And if their this years crop alone shou[ld] fail  
They neither bread nor begging would know more.  
They are the titmans [?] of their race  
And hug the vales with mincing pace  
Like Troglodites. and fight with cranes.  
We walk mid great relations feet  
What they let fall alone we eat  
We are only able  
to catch the fragments from their table  
These elder brothers of our race  
By us unseen with larger pace  
Walk oer our heads, and live our lives  
embody our desires and dreams  
Anticipate our hoped for gleams



We grub the earth for our food  
We know not what is good  
Where does the fragrance of our orchards go  
Our vineyards while we toil below—  
A finer race and finer fed  
Feast and revel above our head.  
The tints and fragrance of the flowers & fruits  
Are but the crumbs from off their table  
While we consume the pulp and roots  
Some times we do assert our kin  
And stand a moment where once they have been  
We hear their sounds and see their sights  
And we experience their delights—  
But for the moment that we stand  
Astonished on the Olympian land  
We do discern no traveller's face  
No elder brother of our race.  
To lead us to the monarch's court  
And represent our case.  
But straightway we must journey back  
retracing slow the arduous track,  
Without the privilege to tell  
Even, the sight we know so well.

## *THE EARTH*

### The Earth

Which seems so barren once gave birth  
To heroes—who oerran her plains,  
Who plowed her seas and reaped her grains



## *THE HERO*

What doth he ask?  
Some worthy task.  
Never to run  
Till that be done,  
that never done  
Under the sun.  
Here to begin  
All things to win  
By his endeavor  
Forever and ever—  
Happy and well  
On this ground to dwell  
This soil subdue  
Plant and renew.  
By might & main  
Hea[l]th & strength gain  
So to give nerve  
To his slenderness  
Yet Some mighty pain  
He would sustain.  
So to preserve  
His tenderness.  
Not be deceived  
Of suffering bereaved  
Not lose his life  
By living too well  
Nor escape strife  
In his lonely cell

And so find out Heaven  
By not knowing Hell.  
Strength like the rock  
To withstand any shock—  
Yet some Aaron's rod  
Some smiting by god  
Occasion to gain  
To shed human tears  
And to entertain  
Still divine fears.

Not once for all, forever, blest,  
Still to be cheered out of the west  
Not from his heart to banish all sighs  
Still be encouraged by the sun rise  
Forever to love and to love and to love  
Within him, around him—beneath him above  
To love is to know, is to feel, is to be  
At once 'tis his birth & his destiny

For earthly pleasures  
Celestial pains  
Heavenly losses  
For earthly gains.  
Must we still eat  
The bread we have spurned  
Must we rekindle  
The faggots we've burned—  
Must we go out  
By the poor man's gate  
Die by degrees  
Not by new fate.

Is then[?] no road  
This way my friend  
Is there no road  
Without any end—  
When I have slumbered  
I have heard sounds  
As travellers passing  
Over my grounds—  
'Twas a sweet music  
Wafted them by  
I could not tell  
If far off or nigh.  
Unless I dreamed it  
This was of yore—  
But I never told it  
To mortal before—  
Never remembered  
But in my dreams  
What to me waking  
A miracle seems

If you will give of your pulse or your grain  
We will rekindle those flames again  
Here will we tarry it is without doubt  
Till a miracle putteth that fire out.

*AT MIDNIGHT'S HOUR I RAISED MY HEAD*

At midnight's hour I raised my head  
The owls were seeking for their bread  
The foxes barked impatient still  
At their wan[?] fate they bear so ill—  
I thought me of eternities delayed  
And of commands but half obeyed—  
The night wind rustled through the glade  
As if a force of men there staid  
The word was whispered through the ranks  
And every hero seized his lance  
The word was whispered through the ranks  
Advance.



*I SEEK THE PRESENT TIME*

I seek the Present Time,  
No other clime,  
Life in to-day,  
Not to sail another way,  
To Paris or to Rome,  
Or farther still from home.  
That man, whoe'er he is,  
Lives but a moral death,  
Whose life is not coeval  
With his breath.  
What are deeds done  
Away from home?  
What the best essay  
On the Ruins of Rome?  
The dusty highways,  
What Scripture says,  
This pleasant weather  
And all signs together—  
The river's meander,  
All things, in short,  
Forbid me to wander  
In deed or in thought.  
In cold or in drouth,  
seek Not the sunny South,  
But make the whole tour  
Of the sunny Present Hour.

For here if thou fail,  
Where canst thou prevail?  
If you love not  
Your own land most,  
You'll find nothing lovely  
Upon a distant coast.  
If you love not  
The latest sunset,  
What is there in pictures  
Or old gems set?

If no man should travel  
Till he had the means,  
There'd be little travelling  
For kings or for Queens.  
The means, what are they!  
They are the wherewithal  
Great expenses to pay;—  
Life got, and some to spare,  
Great works on hand,  
And freedom from care.  
Plenty of time well spent,  
To use,—  
Clothes paid for, and no rent  
In your shoes;—  
Something to eat,  
And something to burn,  
And, above all, no need to return;—

For they who come back,  
,have they not failed,  
Wherever they've ridden  
Or steamed it, or sailed?  
All your grass hayed,—  
All your debts paid,—  
All your wills made?  
Then you might as well have stayed,  
For are you not dead,  
Only not buried?

The way unto "Today",  
The rail road to "Here,"  
They never'll grade that way,  
Nor shorten it, I fear.  
There are plenty of depots  
All the world o'er,  
But not a single station  
At a man's door;  
If we would get near  
To the secret of things,  
We shall not have to hear  
When the engine bell rings.

**LOVES INVALIDES ARE NOT THOSE  
OF COMMON WARS**

Loves invalides are not those of common wars  
More than its scars—  
They are not disabled for a higher love  
But taught to look above.

With erring men I have small affair  
Though they can do some harm & do not care.  
It is a part of them which I can not commend  
A part of them that never was my friend.



AND ONCE AGAIN

And once again  
When I went a-maying—  
& once or twice more I had seen thee before.  
For there grow the May flowe[r]  
    (*Epigaea repens*)  
& the mt cranberry  
    & the screech owl *strepens*

*OLD MEETING-HOUSE BELL*

Old meeting-house bell  
I love thy music well  
It peals through the air  
Sweetly full & fair  
As in the early times  
When I listened to its chimes.

*IS CONSIGNED TO THE NINE*

Is consigned to the nine.  
I to nature consign.  
I am but the [word] of myself.  
Without inlet it lies  
without outlet it flows  
From & to the skies  
It comes & it goes  
I am its source,  
& my life is its course  
I am its stoney shore  
& the gale that passes oer

**AMONG THE WORST OF MEN THAT EVER LIVED**

Among the worst of men that ever lived  
However we did seriously attend  
A little space we let our thoughts ascend  
Experienced our religion & confessed  
'Twas good for us to be there—be anywhere  
Then to a heap of apples we addressed  
& cleared the topmost rider *sine* care  
But our Icarian thoughts returned to ground  
And we went on to heaven the long way round.



## TALL AMBROSIA

Among the signs of autumn I perceive  
The Roman wormwood (called by learned men  
*Ambrosia elatior*, food for gods,—  
For to impartial science the humblest weed  
Is as immortal once[?] as the proudest flower—)  
Sprinkles its yellow dust over my shoes  
As I cross the now neglected garden  
—We trample under foot the food of gods  
& spill their nectar in each drop of dew—  
My honest shoes Fast friends that never stray  
far from my couch thus powdered countryfied  
Bearing many a mile the marks of their adventure  
At the post-house disgrace the Gallic gloss  
Of those well dressed ones who no morning dew  
Nor Roman wormwood ever have been through  
Who never walk but are *transported* rather—  
For what old crime of theirs I do not gather

*TH' AMBROSIA OF THE GODS 'S  
A WEED ON EARTH*

Th' ambrosia of the Gods 's a weed on earth  
Their nectar is the morning dew which on  
'ly our shoes taste—For they are simple folks  
'Tis very fit the ambrosia of the gods  
Should be a weed on earth. As nectar is  
The morning dew with which we wet our shoes  
For the gods are simple folks and we should pine  
upon their humble fare

*I SAW A DELICATE FLOWER HAD  
GROWN UP 2 FEET HIGH*

I saw a delicate flower had grown up 2 feet high  
Between the horse's paths & the wheel track  
Which Dakin's & Maynards wagons had  
Passed over many a time  
An inch more to right or left had sealed its fate  
Or an inch higher. And yet it lived & flourish[e]d  
As much as if it had a thousand acres  
Of untrodden space around it—and never  
Knew the danger it incurred.  
It did not borrow trouble nor invite an  
Evil fate by apprehending it.  
For though the distant market-wagon  
Every other day—inevitably rolled  
This way—it just as inevitably rolled  
In those ruts—And the same  
Charioteer who steered the flower  
Upward—guided the horse & cart aside from it.  
There were other flowers which you would say  
Incurred less danger grew more out of the way  
Which no cart rattled near, no walker daily passed.  
But at length one rambling deviously  
For no rut restrained plucked them  
And then it appeared that they stood  
Directly in his way though he had come  
From farther than the market wagon—

***TO DAY I CLIMBED A HANDSOME  
ROUNDED HILL***

To day I climbed a handsome rounded hill  
Covered with hickory trees wishing to see  
The country from its top—for low hills  
show unexpected prospects—I looked  
many miles over a woody low-land  
Toward Marlborough Framingham & Sudbury  
And as I sat amid the hickory trees



*I AM THE LITTLE IRISH BOY*

I am the little Irish boy  
That lives in the shanty  
I am four years old today  
And shall soon be one and twenty  
I shall grow up  
And be a great man  
And shovel all day  
As hard as I can.

Down in the deep cut  
Where the men lived  
Who made the Rail road.

for supper  
I have some potatoe  
And sometimes some bread  
And then if it's cold  
I go right to bed.

I lie on some straw  
Under my fathers coat

My mother does not cry  
And my father does not scold  
For I am a little Irish Boy  
And I'm four years old.

Every day I go to school  
Along the Railroad  
It was so cold it made me cry  
The day that it snowed.

And if my feet ache  
I do not mind the cold  
For I am a little Irish boy  
& I'm four years old.

*I DO NOT FEAR MY THOUGHTS WILL DIE*

I do not fear my thoughts will die  
For never yet it was so dry  
as to scorch the azure of the sky.  
It knows no withering & no drought  
Though all eyes crop it ne'er gives out  
My eyes my flocks are  
Mountains my crops are  
I do not fear my flocks will stray  
For they were made to roam the day  
For they can wander with the latest light  
Yet be at home at night.

*CANS'T THOU LOVE WITH THY MIND*

Cans't thou love with thy mind,  
And reason with thy heart?  
Cans't thou be kind,  
And from thy darling part?

Cans't thou range earth sea, & air,  
And so meet me everywhere?  
Through all events I will pursue thee,  
Through all persons I will woo thee.



*INDEED INDEED, I CANNOT TELL*

Indeed indeed, I cannot tell,  
Though I ponder on it well,  
Which were easier to state,  
All my love or all my hate.  
Surely, surely, thou wilt trust me  
When I say thou dost disgust me.  
O, I hate thee with a hate  
That would fain annihilate;  
Yet sometimes against my will,  
My dear friend, I love thee still.  
It were treason to our love,  
And a sin to God above,  
One iota to abate  
Of a pure impartial hate.

*THE VESSEL OF LOVE, THE  
VESSEL OF STATE*

The vessel of love, the vessel of state,  
Each is ballasted with hate.  
Every Congress that we hold  
Means the union is dissolved.

But though the south is still enslaved,  
By that oath the Union's saved,  
For 'tis our love and not our hate  
Interests us in their fate.

*WHEN THE TOADS BEGIN TO RING*

When the toads begin to ring,  
Then thinner clothing bring  
or Off your greatcoat fling

*FOREVER IN MY DREAM & IN MY MORNING THOUGHT*

Forever in my dream & in my morning thought  
Eastward a mount ascends—  
But when in the sunbeam its hard outline is sought—  
It all dissolves & ends.  
The woods that way are gates—the pastures too slop[e] up  
To an unearthly ground—  
But when I ask my mates, to take the staff & cup,  
It can no more be found—  
Perchanc[e] I have no shoes fit for the lofty soil  
Where my thoughts graze—  
No properly spun clues—nor well strained mid day oil  
Or—must I mend my ways?  
It is a promised land which I have not yet earned,  
I have not made beginning  
With consecrated hand—I have not even learned  
To lay the underpinning.  
The mountain sinks by day—as do my lofty thoughts,  
Because I'm not highminded.  
If I could think alway above these hills & warts  
I should see it, though blinded.  
It is a spiral path within the pilgrim's soul  
Leads to this mountain's brow  
Commencing at his hearth he reache[s] to this goal  
He knows not when nor how.



***STRANGE THAT SO MANY FICKLE GODS, AS FICKLE AS  
THE WEATHER***

Strange that so many fickle gods, as fickle as the weather,  
Throughout Dame Natures provinces should always pull  
together.

***THE DEEDS OF KING AND MEANEST HEDGER***

The deeds of king and meanest hedger,  
Stand side by side in heaven's ledger.

***WAIT NOT TILL I INVITE THEE, BUT  
OBSERVE***

Wait not till I invite thee, but observe  
I'm glad to see thee when thou com'st.

***GREATER IS THE DEPTH OF SADNESS***

Greater is the depth of sadness  
Than is any height of gladness.

***WHERE I HAVE BEEN***

Where I have been  
There was none seen.

***BETTER WAIT***

Better wait  
Than be too late.

***ON A GOOD MAN***

Here lies—the world  
There rises one.

***MAN MAN IS THE DEVIL***

Man Man is the Devil  
The source of all evil.

*YOU MUST NOT ONLY AIM ARIGHT*

You must not only aim aright,  
But draw the bow with all your might.

*THE CHICADEE*

The chicadee  
Hops near to me.

*ANY FOOL CAN MAKE A RULE*

Any fool can make a rule  
And every fool will mind it.

*ALL THINGS DECAY*

All things decay  
& so must our sleigh

## *EXPECTATION*

No sound from my forge  
Has been heard in the gorge,  
But as a brittle cup  
I've held the hammer up.



*FOR THOUGH THE CAVES  
WERE RABITTED*

For though the caves were rabbitted,  
And the well sweeps were slanted,  
Each house seemed not inhabited  
But haunted.

The pensive traveller held his way,  
Silent & melancholy,  
For every man an ideot was,  
And every house a folly.

**MY FRIENDS, MY NOBLE FRIENDS, KNOW YE**

My friends, my noble friends, know ye—  
That in my waking hours I think of ye  
Ever[?] in godlike band uncompromised & free

*NO EARNEST WORK THAT WILL  
EXPAND THE FRAME*

No earnest work that will expand the frame,  
And give a soundness to the muscles to[o]?  
How ye do waste your time!  
Pray make it wor[th] the while to live,  
Or worth the while to die.  
Show us great actions piled on high,  
Tasking our utmost strength touching the sky,  
As if we lived in a mountainous country.

Hell were not quite so hard to bear  
If one were honored with its hottest place.  
And did ye fear ye should spoil Hell  
By making it sublime?

## *GODFREY OF BOULOGNE*

The moon hung low o'er Provence vales,  
'Twas night upon the sea,  
Fair France was woo'd by Afric gales  
And paid in minstrelsy.  
Along the Rhone then moves a band,  
Their banner in the breeze,  
Of mail-clad men with iron hand,  
And steel on breast and knees.  
The herdsman following his droves  
Far in the night alone,  
Read faintly through the olive groves,—  
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne

The mist still slumbered on the heights  
The glaciers lay in shade,  
The stars withdrew with faded lights,  
The moon went down the glade.  
Proud Jura saw the day from far,  
And showed it to the plain;  
She heard the din of coming war,  
But told it not again.  
The goatherd seated on the rocks,  
Dreaming of battles none  
Was wakened by his startled flocks,—  
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.



Night hung upon the Danube's stream,  
Deep midnight on the vales,  
Along the shore no beacons gleam,  
No sound is on the gales.  
The Turkish lord has banished care  
The harem sleeps profound,  
Save one fair Georgian sitting there  
Upon the Moslem ground.  
The lightning flashed a transient gleam,  
A glancing banner shone,  
A host swept swiftly down the stream,—  
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.

'Twas noon upon Byzantium,  
On street and tower and sea,  
On Europe's edge a warlike hum  
Of gathered chivalry.  
A troop went boldly through the throng,  
Of Ethiops, Arabs, Huns,  
Jews Greeks and Turk, to right their wrong  
Their swords flashed thousand suns.  
Their banner cleaved Byzantium's dust,  
And like the sun it shone,  
their armor had acquired no rust,—  
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.

***WHO EQUALLEST THE  
COWARD'S HASTE***

Who equallest the coward's haste  
And still inspires the faintest heart  
Whose lofty fame is not disgraced  
Though it assume the lowest part

*IVE SEARCHED MY FACULTIES AROUND*

Ive searched my faculties around  
To learn why life to me was lent  
I will attend his faintest sound  
And then declare to man what God hath meant

***UNTIL AT LENGTH THE NORTH  
WINDS BLOW***

Until at length the north winds blow,  
And beating high mid ice and snow,  
The sturdy goose brings up the rear,  
Leaving behind the cold cold year.



*I WAS MADE ERECT AND LONE*

I was made erect and lone  
And within me is the bone  
Still my vision will be clear  
Still my life will not be drear  
To the center all is near  
Where I sit there is my throne  
If age choose to sit apart  
If age choose give me the start  
Take the sap and leave the heart

**WAIT NOT TILL SLAVES  
PRONOUNCE THE WORD**

Spes sibi quisque  
Each one his own hope

Wait not till slaves pronounce the word  
To set the captive free,  
Be free yourselves, be not deferred,  
And farewell slavery.

Ye are all slaves, ye have your price,  
And gang but cries to gang.  
Then rise, the highest of ye rise,  
I hear your fetters clang.

Think not the tyrant sits afar  
In your own breasts ye have  
The District of Columbia  
And power to free the Slave.

The warmest heart the north doth breed,  
Is still too cold and far,  
The colored man's release must come  
From outcast Africa.

Make haste & set the captive free!—  
Are ye so free that cry?  
The lowest depths of slavery  
Leave freedom for a sigh.

What is your whole republic worth?  
Ye hold out vulgar lures,  
Why will ye be disparting earth  
When all of heaven is yours?

He's governéd well who rules himself,  
No despot vetoes him,  
There's no defaulter steals his pelf,  
Nor revolution grim.

'Tis neither silver rags nor gold  
'S the better currency,  
The only specie that will hold  
Is current honesty.

The minister of state hath cares,  
He cannot get release,  
Administer his own affairs,  
Nor settle his own peace,

'Tis easier to treat with kings,  
And please our country's foes,  
Than treat with conscience of the things  
Which only conscience knows.

There's but the party of the great,  
And party of the mean,  
And if there is an Empire State  
'Tis the upright, I ween.

## *TO THE MOUNTAINS*

And when the sun puts out his lamp  
We'll sleep serene within the camp,  
Trusting to his invet'rate skill  
Who leads the stars oer yonder hill,  
Whose discipline doth never cease  
To watch the slumberings of peace,  
And from the virtuous hold afar  
The melancholy din of war.—  
For ye our sentries still outlie,  
The earth your pallet and your screen the sky.

From steadfastness I will not swerve  
Remembering my sweet reserve.

With all your kindness shown from year to year  
Ye do but civil demons still appear,  
Still to my mind  
Ye are inhuman and unkind,  
And bear an untamed aspect to my sight  
After the "civil-suited" night  
As if ye had lain out  
Like to the Indian scout  
Who lingers in the purlieus of the towns  
With unexplored grace and savage frowns.



## *THE FRIEND*

The great friend  
Dwells at the land's end,  
There lives he  
Next to the Sea.  
Fleets come and go,  
Carrying commerce to and fro,  
But still sits he on the sand  
And maketh firm that headland.  
Mariners steer them by his light  
Safely in the darkest night,  
He holds no visible communion  
For his friendship is a union.  
Many men dwell far inland,  
But he alone sits on the strand,  
Whether he ponders men or books  
Ever still he seaward looks,  
Feels the sea-breeze on his cheek,  
At each word the landsmen speak;  
From some distant port he hears  
Of the ventures of past years  
In this the sullen ocean's roar  
Of wrecks upon a distant shore;  
In every companions eye  
A sailing vessel doth descry;  
Marine news he ever reads  
And the slightest glances heeds.

Near is India to him  
Though his native shore is dim,  
But the bark which long was due,  
Never—never—heaves in view,  
Which shall put an end to commerce  
And bring back what it took from us,  
(Which shall make Siberia free  
Of the climes beyond the Sea)  
Fetch the Indies in its hold,  
All their spices and their gold,  
And men sail the sea no more  
The sea itself become a shore,  
To a broader deeper sea,  
A profounder mystery.

*UPON THE BANK AT EARLY DAWN*

Upon the bank at early dawn  
I hear the cocks proclaim the day,  
Though the moon shines securely on,  
As if her course they could not stay.

The stars withhold their shining not  
Or singly or in scattered crowds,  
But seem like Parthian arrows shot  
By yielding Night mid the advancing clouds.

Far in the east their larum rings,  
As if a wakeful host were there,  
And now its early clarion sings  
To warn us sluggard knights beware.

One on more distant perch, more clear,  
But fainter, brags him still,  
But ah, he promises, I fear,  
More than her master's household will fulfil.

The sound invades each silent wood,  
Awakes each slumbering bird,  
Till every fowl leads forth her brood,  
Which on her nest the tuneful summons heard.

Methinks that Time has reached his prime,  
Eternity is in the flower,  
And this the faint, confused chime  
That ushers in the sacred hour.

And has Time got so forward then?  
From what perennial fount of joy,  
Dost thou inspire the hearts of men,  
And teach them how the daylight to employ?

From thy abundance pray impart,  
Who dost so freely spill,  
Some bravery unto my heart,  
And let me taste of thy perennial rill.

There is such health and length of years  
In the elixir of thy note,  
That God himself more young appears,  
From the rare bragging of thy throat.



***BETWEEN THE TRAVELLER AND  
THE SETTING SUN***

Between the traveller and the setting sun,  
Upon some drifting sand heap of the shore,  
A hound stands o'er the carcass of a man.

*MUST WE STILL EAT*

Must we still eat  
The bread we have spurned?  
Must we re kindle  
The faggots we've burned?

***I'M CONTENTED YOU  
SHOULD STAY***

I'm contented you should stay  
For ever and aye  
If you can take yourself away  
Any day.

*HE KNOWS NO CHANGE WHO KNOWS THE TRUE*

He knows no change who knows the true,  
And on it keeps his eye,  
Who always still the unseen doth view;  
Only the false & the apparent die.

Things change, but change not far  
From what they are not but to what they are,  
Or rather 'tis our ignorance that dies;  
Forever lives the knowledge of the wise.



## *THE DEPARTURE*

In this roadstead I have ridden  
In this covert I have hidden  
Friendly thoughts were cliffs to me  
And I hid beneath their lea.

This true people took the stranger  
And warm hearted housed the ranger  
They received their roving guest,  
And have fed him with the best

Whatsoe'er the land afforded  
To the stranger's wish accorded,  
Shook the olive, stripped the vine,  
And expressed the strengthening wine.

And at night they did spread o'er him  
What by day they spread before him,  
That good-will which was repast  
Was his covering at last.

The stranger moored him to their pier  
Without anxiety or fear;  
By day he walked the sloping land,  
By night the gentle heavens he scanned.

When first his bark stood inland  
To the coast of this far Finland,  
Sweet-watered brooks came tumbling to the shore  
The weary mariner to restore.

And still he stayed from day to day  
If he their kindness might repay  
But more and more  
The sullen waves came rolling to the shore.

And still the more the stranger waited  
The less his argosy was freighted,  
And still the more he stayed  
The less his debt was paid.

So He unfurled his mast  
To receive the fragrant blast,  
And that same refreshing gale  
Which had woo'd him to remain  
    Again and again—  
It was that filled his sail  
    And drove him to the main.

All day the low hung clouds  
    Dropt tears into the sea  
And the wind amid the shrouds  
    Sighed plaintively.

## THE FUNERAL BELL

One more is gone  
Out of the busy throng  
That tread these paths;  
The church bell tolls,  
Its sad knell rolls  
To many hearths.

Flower bells toll not,  
Their echoes roll not  
Unto my ear;—  
*There* still perchance,  
That gentle spirit haunts  
A fragrant bier.

Low lies the pall,  
Lowly the mourners all  
Their passage grope;—  
No sable hue  
Mars the serene blue  
Of heaven's cope.

In distant dell  
Faint sounds the funeral bell,  
A heavenly chime;  
Some poet there  
Weaves the light burthened air  
Into sweet rhyme.

## *THE VIRGIN*

With her calm, aspiring eyes  
She doth tempt the earth to rise,  
With humility over all,  
She doth tempt the sky to fall.

In her place she still doth stand  
A pattern unto the firm land  
While revolving spheres come round  
To embrace her stable ground.



*SPEECH OF A SAXON EALDERMAN*

This life, O king, of men on earth,  
Compared with that unknown,  
Gave to a pleasant fancy birth,  
Close by thy throne.

---

The hall is swept,  
The table set,  
And anxious guests are there,  
With shrinking forms,  
For wintry storms  
Go howling through the air.

Thy noble Ealderman and Thegnes  
A cheerful blaze prepare,  
And while without it snows and rains  
Are merry there.

And presently a sparrow comes  
And flutters through the hall,  
It barely picks the scattered crumbs,  
And that is all.

The while the hall it flies about,  
It laughs the cold to scorn,  
But soon it goes a window out,  
And summer's gone.

So is it with this life of men,  
Thus do our moments fly,  
We flutter round the hall, and then  
We pine, and die.

If this new lore can tell us where  
We go when summer's gone,  
Or how this soul of ours did fare  
Ere we were born,

If it do this, then should we try  
To live as may befit,  
So I, for one, gladly do cry,  
Welcome be it!

## FAREWELL

Whether we've far withdrawn  
Or come more near  
Equally the outward form  
Doth no more appear.  
Not thou by distance lost  
No—for regret doth bind  
Me faster to thee now  
Than neighborhood confined.  
Where thy love followeth me  
Is enough society. [?]  
Thy indelible mild eye  
Is my sky.  
Whether by land or sea  
I wander to and fro,  
Oft as I think of thee  
The heavens hang more low  
The pure glance of thy eye  
Doth purge the summer's sky,  
And thy breath so rare  
Doth refine the winter's air.  
my feet would weary be  
Ere they travelled from thee.  
I [discover] by thy face  
That we are of one race  
Flowed in one vein our blood  
Ere the sea found its flood  
The worm may [be] divided  
And each part become a whole,  
But the nobler creature man  
May not separate a span.

## NATURE

O nature I do not aspire  
To be the highest in thy quire,  
To be a meteor in the sky  
Or comet that may range on high,  
Only a zephyr that may blow  
Among the reeds by the river low.  
Give me thy most privy place  
Where to run my airy race.  
In some withdrawn unpublic mead  
Let me sigh upon a reed,  
Or in the [?] woods with leafy din  
Whisper the still evening in,  
For I had rather be thy child  
And pupil in the forest wild  
Than be the king of men elsewhere  
And most sovereign slave of care  
To have one moment of thy dawn  
Than share the city's year forlorn.  
Some still work give me to do  
Only be it near to you.



## *GUIDO'S AURORA*

The God of day rolls his car up the slopes,  
Reining his prancing steeds with steady hand,  
The moon's pale orb through western shadows gropes,  
While morning sheds its light o'er sea and land.

Castles and cities by the sounding main  
Resound with all the busy din of life,  
The fisherman unfurls his sails again  
And the recruited warrior bides the strife.

The early breeze ruffles the poplar leaves,  
The curling waves reflect the washed [?] light,  
The slumbering sea with the day's impulse heaves,  
While o'er the western hills retires the drowsy night.

The sea birds dip their bills in ocean's foam,  
Far circling out over the frothy waves—

---

## **GREECE**

When life contracts into a vulgar span  
And human nature tires to be a man,  
I thank the gods for Greece  
That permanent realm of peace,  
For as the rising moon far in the night  
Checquers the shade with her forerunning light,  
So in my darkest hour my senses seem  
To catch from her Acropolis a gleam.  
Greece who am I that should remember thee?  
Thy Marathon and thy Thermopylae  
Is my life vulgar my fate mean  
Which on such golden memories can lean?

## *POVERTY*

If I am poor it is that I am proud,  
If God has made me naked and a boor  
He did not think it fit his work to shroud.

The poor man comes from heaven direct to earth  
As stars drop down the sky and tropic beams.  
The rich receives in our gross air his birth,  
As from low suns are slanted golden gleams.

Men are by birth equal in this that given  
Themselves and their condition they are even.  
The less of inward essence is to leaven  
The more of outward circumstance is given.

Yon sun is naked bare of satellite  
Unless our earths and moons that office hold,  
Though his perpetual day feareth no night  
And his perennial summer dreads no cold.

Where are his gilded rays but in our sky?  
His solid disk doth float far from us still,  
The orb which through the central way doth fly  
Shall naked seem [?] though proudly circumstanced.

Ill leave my mineral wealth hoarded in earth?  
Buried in seas in mines and ocean caves  
More safely kept than is the merchant's worth,  
Which every storm committeth to the waves.

Man kind may delve but cannot my wealth spend,  
If I no partial store appropriate  
no armed ships into the Indies send  
To rob me of my orient estate

The rich man's clothes keep out the genial sun  
But scarce defend him from the piercing cold  
If he did not his heavenly garment shun  
He would not need to hide beneath a fold.



*I'M NOT ALONE*

I'm not alone  
If I stand by myself,  
But more than one,  
And not [?] in my own pelf.

I'm understood  
If my intent is good,  
For who obeys  
The truth finds his own praise.

*WHAT SOUGHT TH[E]Y TH[U]S AFAR*

What sought th[e]y th[u]s afar  
They sought a faith's pure shrine.

Seek! shall I seek! The Gods above should give,  
They have enough & w[e] do poorly live.

"I ask today for no external thing  
For sight of upland hill and waving tree,  
I do not wish to see the glancing wing  
Of bird nor hear with trembling heart her melody,  
I ask for that which is our whole life's light,  
for the perpetual, true, & clear insight."

Away! away! Thou speakest to me of things  
which in all my endless life I have found  
not and shall not find.

[Word] to Music

Thy lot, or portion of life, is seeking after  
thee; therefore be at rest from seeking  
after it. [Word?]

## MUSIC

Far from this atmosphere that music sounds  
Bursting some azure chink in the dull clouds  
Of sense that overarch my recent years  
And steal his freshness from the noonday sun.  
Ah, I have wandered many ways and lost  
The boyant step, the whole responsive life  
That stood with joy to hear what seemed then  
Its echo, its own harmony borne back  
Upon its ear. This tells of better space,  
Far far beyond the hills the woods the clouds  
That bound my low and plodding valley life,  
Far from my sin, remote from my distrust,  
When first my healthy morning life perchance  
Trod lightly as on clouds, and not as yet  
My weary and faint hearted noon had sunk  
Upon the clod while the bright day went by.

Lately, I feared my life was empty, now  
I know though a frail tenement that it still  
Is worth repair, if yet its hollowness  
Doth entertain so fine a guest within, and through  
Its empty aisles there still doth ring  
Though but the echo of so high a strain;  
It shall be swept again and cleansed from sin  
To be a thoroughfare for celestial airs;  
Perchance the God who is proprietor  
Will pity take on his poor tenant here  
And countenance his efforts to improve  
His property and make it worthy to revert,  
At some late day Unto himself again.



*I'M THANKFUL THAT MY LIFE  
DOTH NOT DECEIVE*

I'm thankful that my life doth not deceive  
Itself with a low loftiness, half height,  
And think it soars when still it dip its way  
Beneath the clouds on noiseless pinion  
Like the crow or owl, but it doth know  
The full extent of all its trivialness,  
Compared with the splendid heights above.

See how it waits to watch the mail come in  
While 'hind its back *the sun goes out perchance*.  
And yet their lumbering cart brings me no word  
Not one scrawled leaf such as my neighbors get  
To cheer them with the slight events forsooth  
Faint ups and downs of their far distant friends—  
And now tis passed. What next? See the long train  
Of teams wreathed in dust, their atmosphere;  
Shall I attend until the last is passed?  
Else why these ears that hear the leader's bells  
Or eyes that link me in procession.  
But hark! the drowsy day has done its task,  
Far in yon hazy field where stands a barn  
Unanxious hens improve the sultry hour  
And with contented voice now brag their deed—  
A new laid egg—Now let the day decline—  
Th[e]y'll lay another by tomorrow's sun.



## MANHOOD

I love to see the man, a long-lived child,  
As yet uninjured by all worldly taint  
As the fresh infant whose whole life is play.  
'Tis a serene spectacle for a serene day;  
But better still I love to contemplate  
The mature soul of lesser innocence,  
Who hath travelled far on life's dusty road  
Far from the starting point of infancy  
And proudly bears his small degen'racy  
Blazon'd on his memorial standard high  
Who from the sad experience of his fate  
Since his bark struck on that unlucky rock  
Has proudly steered his life with his own hands.  
Though his face harbors less of innocence  
Yet there do chiefly lurk within its depths  
Furrowed by care, but yet all over spread  
With the ripe bloom of a self-wrought content  
Noble resolves which do reprove the gods  
And it doth more assert man's eminence  
Above the happy level of the brute  
And more doth advertise me of the heights  
To which no natural path doth ever lead  
No natural light can ever light our steps,  
—But the far-piercing ray that shines  
From the recesses of a brave man's eye.

***THE MOON MOVES UP HER SMOOTH AND SHEENY PATH***

The moon moves up her smooth and sheeny path  
Without impediment; and happily  
The brook Glides by lulled by its tinkling;  
Meteeors drop down the sky without chagrin  
And rise again; but my cares never rest.  
No charitable laws alas cut me  
An easy orbit round the sun, but I  
Must make my way through rocks and seas and earth  
my steep and devious way Uncertain still.  
My current never rounds into a lake  
In whose fair heart the heavens come to bathe  
Nor does my life drop freely but a rod[?]  
By its resistless course  
As Meteors do.



## *LIFE*

My life is like a stately warrior horse,  
That walks with fluent pace along the way,  
And I the upright horseman that bestrides  
His flexuous back, feeding my private thoughts.—  
Alas, when will this rambling head and neck  
Be welded to that firm and brawny breast?—  
But still my steady steed goes proudly forth,  
Mincing his stately steps along the road;  
The sun may set, the silver moon may rise,  
But my unresting steed holds on his way.  
He is far gone ere this, you fain would say,  
He is far going. Plants grow and rivers run;  
You ne'er may look upon the ocean waves,  
At morn or eventide, but you will see  
Far in th' horizon with expanded sail,  
Some solitary bark stand out to sea,  
Far bound—well so my life sails far,  
To double some far cape not yet explored.  
A cloud ne'er standeth in the summer's sky,  
The eagle sailing high, with outspread wings  
Cleaving the silent air, resteth him not  
A moment in his flight, the air is not his perch.  
Nor doth my life fold its unwearied wings,  
And hide its head within its downy breast,  
But still it plows the shoreless seas of time,  
Breasting the waves with an unsanded bow.

*PRAY TO WHAT EARTH DOES THIS  
SWEET COLD BELONG*

Pray to what earth does this sweet cold belong,  
Which asks no duties and no conscience?  
The moon goes up by leaps her cheerful path  
In some far summer stratum of the sky,  
While stars with their cold shine bedot her way.  
The fields gleam mildly back upon the sky,  
And far and near upon the leafless shrubs  
The snow dust still emits a silvery light.  
Under the hedge, where drift banks are their screen,  
The titmice now pursue their downy dreams,  
As often in the sweltering summer nights  
The bee doth drop asleep in the flower cup,  
When evening overtakes him with his load.  
By the brooksides, in the still genial night,  
The more adventurous wanderer may hear  
The crystals shoot and form, and winter slow  
Increase his rule by gentlest summer means.



***WHEN THE OAKS ARE IN THE GRAY***

When the oaks are in the gray  
Then Farmers plant away.

## INSPIRATION

Whate'er we leave to God, God does,  
And blesses us;  
The work we choose should be our own,  
God lets alone.

If with light head erect I sing,  
Though all the muses lend their force,  
From my poor love of anything,  
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope,  
Listening behind me for my wit,  
With faith superior to hope,  
More anxious to keep back than forward it,

Making my soul accomplice there  
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,  
Then will the verse forever wear,—  
Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things  
Floats in review before my mind,  
And such true love and reverence brings,  
That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But now there comes unsought, unseen,  
Some clear, divine electuary,  
And I who had but sensual been,  
Grow sensible, and as God is, am wary.

I hearing get who had but ears,  
And sight, who had but eyes before,  
I moments live who lived but years,  
And truth discern who knew but learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,  
I see beyond the range of sight,  
New earths and skies and seas around,  
And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony  
Pierces my soul through all its din,  
As through its utmost melody,—  
Farther behind than they—farther within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,  
Its voice than thunder is more loud,  
It doth expand my privacies  
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,  
With so serene and lofty tone,  
That idle Time runs gadding by,  
And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Then chiefly is my natal hour,  
And only then my prime of life,  
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,  
'Tis peace's end and war's beginning strife.



'T 'hath come in summer's broadest noon,  
By a grey wall or some chance place,  
Unseasoned time, insulted June,  
And vexed the day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my couch it makes,  
More rich than are Arabian drugs,  
That my soul scents its life and wakes  
The body up beneath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse—the heavenly maid,  
The star that guides our mortal course,  
Which shows where life's true kernel's laid,  
Its wheat's fine flower, and its undying force.

She with one breath attunes the spheres,  
And also my poor human heart,  
With one impulse propels the years  
Around, and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt forever more,  
Nor falter from a steadfast faith,  
For though the system be turned o'er,  
God takes not back the word which once he saith.

I will then trust the love untold  
Which not my worth nor want has bought,  
Which wooed me young and woos me old,  
And to this evening hath me brought.



My memory I'll educate  
To know the one historic truth,  
Remembering to the latest date  
The only true and sole immortal youth.

Be but thy inspiration given,  
No matter through what danger sought,  
I'll fathom hell or climb to heaven,  
And yet esteem that cheap which love has bought.

---

Fame cannot tempt the bard  
Who's famous with his God,  
Nor laurel him reward  
Who hath his Maker's nod.

## *INSPIRATION*

If thou wilt but stand by my ear,  
When through the field thy anthem's rung,  
When that is done I will not fear  
But the same power will abet my tongue.

*DELAY*

No generous action can delay  
Or thwart our higher, steadier aims,  
But if sincere and true are they,  
It will arouse our sight and nerve our frames.

## *THE FALL OF THE LEAF*

Thank God who seasons thus the year,  
And sometimes kindly slants his rays;  
For in his winter he's most near  
And plainest seen upon the shortest days.

Who gently tempers now his heats,  
And then his harsher cold, lest we  
Should surfeit on the summer's sweets,  
Or pine upon the winter's crudity.

A sober mind will walk alone,  
Apart from nature, if need be,  
And only its own seasons own;  
For nature leaving its humanity.

Sometimes a late autumnal thought  
Has crossed my mind in green July,  
And to its early freshness brought  
Late ripened fruits, and an autumnal sky.

. . . .

The evening of the year draws on,  
The fields a later aspect wear;  
Since Summer's garishness is gone,  
Some grains of night tincture the noontide air.



Behold! the shadows of the trees  
Now circle wider 'bout their stem,  
Like sentries that by slow degrees  
Perform their rounds, gently protecting them.

And as the year doth decline,  
The sun allows a scantier light;  
Behind each needle of the pine  
There lurks a small auxiliar to the night.

I hear the cricket's slumbrous lay  
Around, beneath me, and on high;  
It rocks the night, it soothes the day,  
And everywhere is Nature's lullaby.

But most he chirps beneath the sod,  
When he has made his winter bed;  
His creak grown fainter but more broad,  
A film of autumn o'er the summer spread.

Small birds, in fleets migrating by,  
Now beat across some meadow's bay,  
And as they tack and veer on high,  
With faint and hurried click beguile the way.

Far in the woods, these golden days,  
Some leaf obeys its Maker's call;  
And through their hollow aisles it plays  
With delicate touch the prelude of the Fall.

Gently withdrawing from its stem,  
It lightly lays itself along  
Where the same hand hath pillowed them,  
Resigned to sleep upon the old year's throng.

The loneliest birch is brown and sere,  
The furthest pool is strewn with leaves,  
Which float upon their watery bier,  
Where is no eye that sees, no heart that grieves.

The jay screams through the chestnut wood;  
The crisped and yellow leaves around  
Are hue and texture of my mood—  
And these rough burrs my heirlooms on the ground.

The threadbare trees, so poor and thin—  
They are no wealthier than I;  
But with as brave a core within  
They rear their boughs to the October sky.

Poor knights they are which bravely wait  
The charge of Winter's cavalry,  
Keeping a simple Roman state,  
Discumbered of their Persian luxury.

*A WINTER AND  
SPRING SCENE*

The willows droop,  
The alders stoop,  
The pheasants group  
    Beneath the snow;  
The fishes glide  
From side to side,  
In the clear tide,  
    The ice below.

The ferret weeps,  
The marmot sleeps,  
The owlet keeps  
    In his snug nook.  
The rabbit leaps,  
The mouse out-creeps,  
The flag out-peeps,  
    Beside the brook.

The snow-dust falls,  
The otter crawls,  
The partridge calls  
    Far in the wood;  
The traveller dreams,  
The tree-ice gleams,  
The blue jay screams  
    In angry mood.



The apples thaw,  
The ravens caw,  
The squirrels gnaw  
    The frozen fruit;  
To their retreat  
I track the feet  
Of mice that eat  
    The apple's root.

The axe resounds,  
And bay of hounds,  
And tinkling sounds  
    Of wintry fame;  
The hunter's horn  
Awakes the dawn  
On field forlorn,  
    And frights the game.

The tinkling air  
Doth echo bear  
To rabbit's lair,  
    With dreadful din;  
She scents the air,  
And far doth fare,  
Returning where  
    She did begin.



The fox stands still  
Upon the hill  
Not fearing ill  
    From trackless wind.  
But to his foes  
The still wind shows  
In treacherous snows  
    His tracks behind.

Now melts the snow  
In the warm sun.  
The meadows flow,  
The streamlets run.  
The spring is born,  
The wild bees hum,  
The insects hum,  
And trees drop gum.  
And winter's gone,  
And summer's come.

The chic-a-dee  
Lisps in the tree,  
The winter bee  
    Not fearing frost;  
The small nuthatch  
The bark doth scratch  
Some worm to catch  
    At any cost.

The catkins green  
Cast o'er the scene  
A summer sheen,  
A genial glow.

I melt, I flow,  
And rippling run,  
Like melting snow  
In this warm sun.

***WHY DO THE SEASONS CHANGE?  
AND WHY***

Why do the seasons change? and why  
Does Winter's stormy brow appear?  
Is it the word of him on high,  
Who rules the changing varied year.

***FRIENDS! THAT PARTING TEAR  
RESERVE IT***

Friends! that parting tear reserve it,  
Tho' 'tis doubly dear to me!  
Could I think I did deserve it,  
How much happier would I be.



*IN ADAMS FALL*

In Adams fall  
We sinned all.  
In the new Adam's rise  
We shall all reach the skies.

*IN TIMES OF YORE, 'TIS SAID,  
THE SWIMMING ALDER*

In times of yore, 'tis said, the swimming Alder,  
Fashioned rude, with branches lopt, and stript  
Of its smooth coat,—  
Where fallen tree was not, and rippling stream's  
Vast breadth forbade adventurous leap,  
The brawny swain did bear secure to farthest shore.

The Book has passed away,  
And with the book the lay,  
Which in my youthful days I loved to ponder;  
Of curious things it told,  
How wise Men Three of old,       (Gotham)  
In bowl did venture out to sea,—  
And darkly hints their future fate.

If men have dared the Main to tempt  
In such frail bark, why may not washtub round,  
Or bread-trough square? oblong?—suffice to cross  
The purling wave? and gain the destined port.

***BY HIS GOOD GENIUS PROMPTED  
OR THE POWER***

By his good genius prompted or the power  
That fills the mind with





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\* Since the titles (Thoreau's or otherwise) of variant versions are also listed in this index, each variant title is ascribed to the first page of its related basic text. Thus, the title "Winter Memories" was given, in *Poems of Nature*, to one version of "Within the circuit of this plodding life"; and a reader looking for the poem "Winter Memories" and referred here to p. 3 will find on that page Thoreau's final version of the poem in the form of "Within the circuit of this plodding life"—even though he will not find the title "Winter Memories" there. (In the Critical Edition, however, all titled and untitled variant versions are recorded in the textual notes.)



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